

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER
1926



EDITED BY
LEONARD HUXLEY

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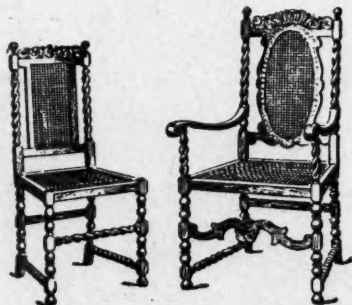


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BOOK NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

Spirit

THE reviewers have been very kind to *The Letters of Mary Nisbet, Countess of Elgin*, which Lt.-Col. Nisbet Hamilton Grant has edited. 'Delicious,' 'vivacious,' 'intimate,' 'fresh,' 'affectionate,' are among the adjectives most used to express the charm of this volume affording such ingenious glimpses into late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century life. Many reviewers have chosen to remark upon Lady Elgin's descriptions of Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson, but her husband's comments upon Nelson are specially interesting. There is a curious co-incidence between the impression made upon Lord Elgin and the living words put into the mouth of Captain Dunstan by Mr. Stanley Weyman in his latest novel *Queen's Folly*. Here are the two. Lord Elgin: 'His figure is mean, and in general, his countenance is without animation. Lord Nelson when on business—particularly in private—shows infinite fire.' Captain Dunstan: 'One arm, one eye, about half a man, and as sick as a three-months' puppy when there's a breeze. But in action, when the bulkheads are down and the linstocks are lighted, then, ma'am——.' 'Yes?' —'A flame of fire!' Such is the domination of the spiritual over the material.

Back to the Land

IT is the old battle cry which makes itself heard upon reading Captain Anthony Eden's new book *Places in the Sun*. The book is a result of the Empire Press Conference in Australia which the author attended as a member of the British delegation and which provided him with exceptional opportunity for observation in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Naturally, he deals at greatest length with Australia. He discusses his impressions, and the problems they cause to arise, with energy and frankness, and his book should help materially in bringing these problems home to thinking men and women of this country. It seems, however, that in each of the great countries touched upon, the paramount need is for agriculturists, and the problems largely boil down to the how's and why's of inducing a back-to-the-land movement and putting an end to the drift to the cities. It is a Titan's task. Agriculture is hard work, and this is 1926.

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Records

AFTER the success of *Beau Geste* a big demand for its successor, *Beau Sabreur*, was to be expected. Arrangements were made accordingly to anticipate demand, and it was believed that the first heavy printing would supply pre-publication needs and leave a working balance against the time when the critics had given expression to their judgments. But estimates were soon proved to be wrong. It became evident that the first impression was insufficient and a second, then a third, and at the time of going to press a seventh impression has been put in hand. Orders, however, continue to arrive and to be repeated. It is clear that P. C. Wren has once again given the public 'what it wants'—and when that happens calculations are apt to become upset. *Beau Geste* has sold for two years at a consistent high rate and its total sales are great, but, if present appearances count for anything, *Beau Sabreur* bids fair to lead the way in a very short time.

Lifting the Veil

FROM 1859 when Edward Fitzgerald's first renderings were vainly offered for sale at a penny a time, *The Rubāiyāt of Omar Khayyām* has increased in popularity until it is probably safe to say that no verse, with the single exception of Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, is more widely known and quoted. In *Omar Khayyām, The Poet*, a new addition to the WISDOM OF THE EAST series, the Rev. T. H. Weir, D.D., has gone back to the oldest known manuscript in order to present to us an estimate of Omar, the man and the poet, and an analysis of his work. That Fitzgerald took liberties is admitted; that others have added their own quatrains is proved; and that many of the poet's references are incomprehensible is true. Hence this attempt to picture the man and his times, to elucidate his obscurities, and to render a translation that, intelligible in its entirety, still loses none of its former beauty and hedonic appeal.

Three Novels

THEY are *Children of the Border*, by Mrs. Theodore Pennell, *In Those Days*, by William Ransted Berry, and *The Way of the Panther*, by Denny C. Stokes. The last is known to readers of the CORNHILL, for it appeared serially in these pages and caused some



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comment. There were readers who disliked the story; there were others who considered it an excellent piece of craftsmanship. Doubtless the difference of opinion will be continued by the reviewers; but, whatever the ultimate verdict, *The Way of the Panther* is not one of the books they will throw aside unfinished and dismiss in a few pointed words. The story grips. Having begun, one *must* end; and, even to-day, there are not too many books of which this can be said. Diametrically opposed in theme and treatment but at one with it in crescendo interest, *In Those Days* is an excellent romance written most attractively. It relates two love stories in a Near-Eastern setting, and tells of the perils through which the lovers passed ere they reached the ends that were beginnings. The atmosphere is faithful and the characterisation keen and bright. This is a good novel displaying talent. *Children of the Border*, differing from the usual frontier story, confines itself to the hillmen of which it tells. Herein may be read of native life, so simple yet so complex and always so different. In the fidelity of its pictures and the simplicity of its unfolding lies the charm of this story—a charm which caused *Country Life* to say of it: ‘It is a blessed relief, a halt in the desert by an oasis of exceptional verdure.’

The Disguise

THERE is a new edition of that thoroughly good travel book *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, by E. B. Soane. It contains a Memoir of the author written by Sir Arnold T. Wilson, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., etc., and additional illustrations. When this book first appeared, so fantastic did some of the experience appear, that some readers refused to believe it and correspondence became highly diverting. It describes the author's adventures during a dangerous journey from Beyrut to Baghdad, disguised as a native. The venture was successful owing to Soane's wonderful knowledge of native habits and—more important—native dialects. It was the latter knowledge which helped most to make his book the graphic record it is, and to provide additions to the knowledge of Kurdish and Chaldean history as important as they are interesting. Since he wrote the book, the war has sent many across Soane's lonely tracks, but the wonder and interest of the story remain untarnished to gratify those who know those wastes and those to whom they are but names on a map.

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BOOK NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

Romance

WILL there ever be another Rider Haggard? Adventure stories come and go, authors rise and are hidden by those who follow on their heels, imagination and invention spend themselves to the uttermost—and still he stands, undisturbed, the master of romantic fiction. We may never look upon his like again, but his stories remain to us, and it is to them that, sated with modernity and psychology, we may turn for refreshment. Two of the best in *Moon of Israel* and *Jess* have been published at 3s. 6d. net each. Neither needs description. The first, with its fascinating pictures of Egypt at the height of her glory, of the Israelites, the plagues, and the exodus; and the second, with its tragic Jess sacrificing herself in Africa of the first Boer War, are too well known. Sufficient that a second reading unearths fresh pleasures in each and leaves one still more closely attached to their author.

Cheap and Nice

AMONG 3s. 6d. net editions to be recorded are *Strange Roads* and *The Strong Hours*, by Maud Diver. The second follows the first, being concerned with the same characters, though it is not a sequel in the accepted sense of the word. They deal with colonial life and the effect of the war on a typically English family. *John Penrose* is by J. C. Tregarthen, whose nature stories are so popular. A native of Cornwall, he writes charmingly of this part of the country and of the men and women, the birds and the beasts, who make it their home. Then there is a cheaper edition of that good first-novel *John Frensham, K.C.*, which brought eulogies and the limelight to its young author, Sinclair Murray. Since this novel was published he has become a favourite with novel-readers, and this edition will not lack a ready market. To the 2s. net library there are two additions both familiar to lovers of exciting and well-written fiction. They are *Raffles* and *Mr. Justice Raffles*, by E. W. Hornung.

True to Type

PIG IRON, Charles G. Norris's new novel, is out, and it is well worth the little additional effort the reading of it demands. It is a long novel, dealing with almost the complete life of the principal character, Samuel Osgood Smith, and it presents a

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BOOK NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

carefully drawn picture of 'average' American life, an engrossing story of success and failure and hard work and foresight and love and character development, and a point of view, which blend to give both pleasure and satisfaction to the reader. Very few American novels illuminate American life, manners, and citizens with an uncoloured beam. In so doing, *Pig Iron* becomes one with *Main Street* and one or two of the novels of Ellen Glasgow, and as such it merits attention.

Next Month

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE for October will contain, among other contributions, an instalment of the new serial, *The Winds of March*, by Halliwell Sutcliffe.

Makik: A Soldier of the East, by Major Hubert Winthrop Young, D.S.O. The writer, who was nominally an understudy of the meteoric Colonel Lawrence in Arabia, describes the Hejaz campaign, and the gradual organisation of King Feisal's forces and the Bedouin irregulars which culminated in the astonishing expedition across the desert to cut the Hejaz railway at the appointed day and prevent reinforcements from reaching the Turks when Allenby began his great drive.

A New Series of Letters from Jane Welsh Carlyle to her Aunt, Mrs. George Welsh.

Major-General Sir George MacMunn, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O., writes a centenary article on *The Two Sieges of Bhurtpur*, a landmark in Indian military history.

The Hon. Mr. Justice MacKinnon contributes to the store of Johnsoniana a study of *Samuel Johnson, Undergraduate*.

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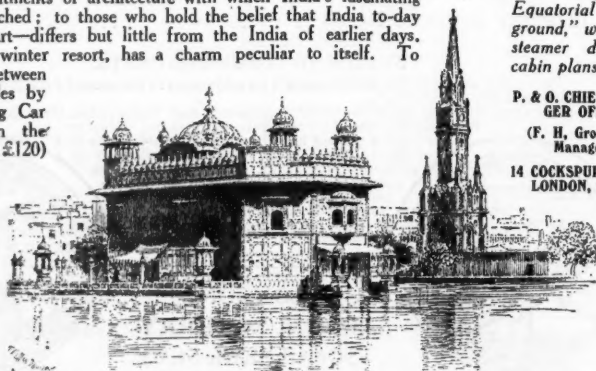
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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1926.

THE WINDS OF MARCH.

BY HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE.

BOOK I.—STORRITH.

CHAPTER I.

WEE DAUNT.

THE road wound steep and bare between the barren pastures, dipped sharply into a ravine where already it was almost dusk, then clambered up into the heights. The sun, low above the far brink of the moor, was storm-red as the land itself. To the four quarters of an angry sky the heather billowed, its crimson acres striding forward till, like living warriors, they met and fought the dying sun.

The day's heat still lingered. Lapwings and curlews, late to get to bed, whirled overhead, crying like lost spirits doomed to rove the moor for ever. A raven croaked as he winged by. Little moor-tits fluttered and chirped, as if bewildered by the grim and forthright land.

No breeze stirred. The curlews' wild lament added only a further loneliness to this moor that had never known the plough or husbandry. It seemed to lie forgotten by all men, except that grey sheep cropped here and there.

It was the moor's flower-time—the one brief season when it donned bright clothes—but it was savage in its splendour. Winter gales had lashed the heather. Raw, nipping winds of spring had chilled the buds that broke to flower at last. Small wonder that they were crimson in the sunlight. In the moor's womb, before ever they were born, they had been reared on battle.

Rise followed rise, each lonelier than the last and striding nearer to the sky, till the sandy track wound past a hummock of gnarled heather. On top of the hummock sat a figure so gnome-like and misshapen that it brought no human note to ease the moor's austerity. The little man, in his patched, russet clothes, seemed old as the heath itself—a something terrible and still, ancient in knowledge bred of turmoil and the silences.

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Youth had never been his. Age had not whitened his thick, red hair. He was a changeless thing, like the Brown Man of the Heather, and the moor-folk dealt kindly with him, uncertain whether he was to be feared or cherished.

Wee Daunt, as they named him, was sitting with his head bunched up in his arms as he watched the sun get down above a belt of intake-land, lush and green amid the flaming heath. On the far side of it a house looked out across its kingdom of wild acres—a house so grey, so sturdy, that it seemed to have grown, like Daunt, from the moor. The sunset fire could only tinge its walls with warmer breath. It could do nothing to soften its grim front. Peaceful smoke rose from its chimney-stacks, but the turret-tower, the huddled mass of loop-holed masonry, stood astride the moor-top, a menace to all peace.

Daunt, the gnome-like man, knew much about this house of Storrieth, but was for ever striving to learn more. It drew him near whenever sundown brought promise of a storm to come. Somewhere at the back of his mind—the mind that was clearer than his neighbours guessed—was the knowledge that he was linked to Storrieth as a man is chained to his own. There were times when he almost had the secret, and to-night, as he brooded in the heather and watched a solitary light glow from an upper room, some chord of memory was touched.

Far away back in time—he could never keep count of months and years—he had wakened in the two-roomed cottage that was home to him, and heard his mother gossiping with a neighbour.

‘Servants will not bide at Storrieth. Small wonder. The place is cluttered up with ghosts and rats—ay, and with what lies in its cellars, if half of what they say be true.’

Then his mother’s crony had spoken, with bated breath, of the bad old Scroope who lived at Storrieth ‘in her fore-elders’ days’—the Scroope who used, on stormy nights, to set a lantern high up in a window that overlooked the bog—the wide, merciless bog that lay between his own house and the Elliots’.

Wee Daunt sat up in the heather now, just as he had sat up in his bed on that far-off night. He could hear it all again—his mother and her crony telling the tale of how Scroope could never forget the age-old quarrel with the Elliots, and how he used to set this beacon-light to guide any way-lost roysterer of that race to a slow and awful death.

Daunt watched the light shine out, now as then, on the far side of Storrieth where it overlooked the bogs. And the longer he watched

the sharper grew remembrance of the gossip he had heard long ago. They had talked of Storrieth's hidden stairways, the dungeons tucked away in the thickness of its walls, the brawls and treacherous killings that had peopled its corridors with things that walked by stealth, peopled its every nook and cranny with night-time voices that would not be still.

The little misshapen man ceased his watching of the Storrieth light. Clear across the years he recalled the end of that long gossip—he sitting up in bed, and the two women talking in the other room.

'What I'd like to know,' said his mother's crony, 'is who fathered your wee Daunt—and who mothered the poor, cross-born lad.'

His mother's voice had been shrill with challenge. 'As for his father, let that be. But he's mine, I tell you! Why shouldn't I have a chance-come-by bairn if I choose?'

'Why shouldn't you? But I never thought he was yours, for all that.'

Wee Daunt got up from the heather and turned for home. The mystery of his life was quick about him. His uncouth body—and yet the dreams of swift adventure that all but broke it up at times—the long thoughts that brought him constantly to brood above the house of Storrieth—all were jumbled up as he went through the red gloaming. He crossed by the edge of the bogland—grave of many wayfarers—and dipped into the dark of Crummock Ghyll. He had eyes like a cat's to find his way through the murk, and feet that served him well down and up the slippery, rock-strewn track.

He came through the Ghyll and out into a hollow of the pastures where a ling-thatched cottage found partial shelter. But the thorn-trees guarding it had known little shelter from their youth upward; and their branches, half stripped already by the gales that roamed these naked uplands, stretched across the roof like lean, beseeching hands.

His mother turned in her chair beside the hearth as he came in. She was tall and sinewy and her eyes had not lost their fire, nor her voice its snarling strength.

'Been at your dreams again?'

'Yes,' said Daunt, 'I've been wondering.'

'You would be, instead of fetching peats from the shed and helping me get warm. I'm cold, lad, I tell you. The wind's raw in my bones, and always will be.'

Wee Daunt was used to her scoldings. He answered nothing, but brought wood in from the shed and coaxed the fire into a roaring

blaze. He got supper for them both, and when that was eaten he watched pictures in the fire and fell to his dreaming again.

'You've been wondering?' snapped Eliza Daunt, breaking roughly into his dreams.

He passed a hand through his rough, tousled hair and looked at her like a man roused from sleep. 'Yes,—wondering. I'd like to know who my father was.'

She looked at him for a while, then broke into a cackle of laughter that had no mirth. 'There's a many in your plight,' she said.

'If you would tell—'

'Ay, if I would.'

Wee Daunt got no more from her. It was her grim delight to scold and thwart him at every turn, and had been for years out of mind. So he got early to his bed in the little room where rain leaked through the thatch, and did not feel the drip-drip of water on his face, nor hear the gale that skelped across the moor.

Fast asleep, he was living with wilder storms than this—living in the old days when Storrieth, grey on its hill-top, was a hive of turbulent stalwarts who rode rough-shod through the countryside. The way of a Scroope was the wind's, blowing where it listed. They had ever ridden wind-shod horses, too; and in his dreams to-night Wee Daunt was one of them.

No man in all the moor could know how good this dream-life was to Daunt. His body was dwarfed no longer. He was one of the Scroopes, straight and limber, with rude health singing in his blood. He shared wild gallops, combats in the open, blithe wooings when June was hot and swift among the upland glens. He was a Scroope, holding his own, glad of strength and life's goblet crammed to the brim with frolic.

He woke in the middle of his dream, and lay awhile hearing only what had been. Then the gale's roar sounded overhead, tearing at the thatch, and the rain dripped down on him. And after that, he listened to his mother's voice talking to her crony in the next room—as he had listened in the far-off days.

'I'd like to know who fathered Wee Daunt,' the crony was saying, 'and who mothered him.'

'You would. You've wanted to know since I brought him first to my cottage. As for mothering him, he's mine.'

Wee Daunt stretched himself, longing to sleep again. But no slumber came. He, too, was asking all afresh who had fathered him, and the old question fretted in his mind.

CHAPTER II.

THE LANDMARK FIR.

STORRITH, the house that Wee Daunt watched with yesterday's crimson sun-glare on it, showed less grim this morning, its chimneys sending smoke-wisps up into a soft and amber mist, through which the sun was stealing.

On the slopes above, steam curled from the wet, nut-brown hay ; for rains had followed rains since the scything, and no sun now could help the crop. It must serve as bedding for the cattle, instead of fodder.

Beyond the wet acres, the moor glowed crimson through the haze. The breeze was merry—a child o' the wind, playing at tempest.

Roger Scroope, as he came out of Storrieth and crossed the flagged courtyard, seemed not to realise that he was the master of a house riddled with ancient ghosts. The wild race he sprang from had peopled its rooms and rustling corridors with memories that stirred in sleep and sometimes cried aloud. They had sired and grandsired body and spirit of their present heir, and he carried the mixed heritage with indolent good-humour.

Tall, broad, and lean—what the country speech named 'limber'—his blue eyes and wind-bronzed face spoke of some far-off Scandinavian who had raided up the moors long since and intruded into his family history. His thoughts were not concerned with past days. He had a gun under his arm, a dog at his heels—and, in front, one of those days up the moor that were all-sufficing.

The sandy track wound steep to the topmost wilderness of heath and bog, where a big, upstanding fir stood dark against the sky. The only tree on that bare upland, it had gathered round it, as landmarks do, a host of legends. Tradition, far as it reached back, could not recall its sapling time. To the folk of the scattered moorland homesteads it had grown to be part of their daily lives, and they liked to nod a greeting to it as they passed.

Scroope's easy-going mood yielded to vague restlessness as he climbed the hill. The sun, free of the lower mists, shone full on the tree's thick, ruddy bole—and Lone Fir was linked inseparably with his own house of Storrieth. It stood in his lands, and was known from of old as Storrieth's Luck. It had pointed more than once the track of safety to a Scroope, when mists hid all the moor

in fleecy thralldom and parted for a moment's glimpse of the Fir and the road it guarded.

Memories of this sort, built into his young days, always returned to Scroope as he neared Lone Fir. When he reached it now, recollections of a harsher sort were stirred. Stephen Elliot was standing under its shadow—a gnarled old man, twisted out of shape by rheumatism, and leaning on two sticks.

Scroope halted, understanding the look of sharp malevolence in Elliot's eyes.

'Well?' he asked, meeting the challenge.

'I was thinking, as you came up, that Lone Fir shows cracks here and there. He'll go, in some near-by gale—and that's the end of Storrieth.'

'Are you sure of that?' asked Scroope, with rough question.

'Yes, sure enough. There's a saying known to all the moorside since time began. *If Lone Fir goes, all Storrieth follows.*'

'Mr. Elliot,' he said, with gruff humour, 'you're flogging a dead horse. You've been flogging it for more years than I care to count.'

Elliot let his sticks fall into the heather. He forgot his helplessness. A lifetime's brooding hate gave him vigour to stand almost straight. He reached the fir's great trunk. He traced, with fingers twisted a moment before, the deep, runnelled flaws that wind-driven rain, frost and sun glare had chiselled in the bole.

'Lone Fir's not as young as he was. He's getting wrinkles, as you might say. I come here often, to watch the wrinkles deepen and the rain sap in. There'll be an end of Storrieth soon.'

'Will there? I'm younger than Lone Fir.'

Elliot glanced at Scroope's hard-set face. He heard the sharp ring in his voice. Then his strength, borrowed at usury, left him utterly. He fell into the heather, groping for his sticks; and, when Scroope would have aided a man so lost and helpless, he would have none of him. Somehow the old man found his props, and raised himself and cursed Scroope with bitter zeal.

Scroope stood facing Elliot for a long moment.

'The old trouble rankles still?'

'What else could it do? I had a daughter, and that way suffering comes.'

'I know the story,' broke in Scroope impatiently. 'It happened thirty years since, and it's buried out of sight by now.'

'Buried? Graves have a trick of opening when you least want them to.'

The man's voice was quiet, as a brooding storm is quiet. He had fed on hate, eaten and slept with rancour, till they were woven into his every thought.

'Your father did as he willed with that girl of mine,' he went on, 'and he left her to carry her trouble—alone.'

Scroope had a barbarous longing to pluck the cripple's sticks away and beat him with them till his nimble tongue was stilled.

'Say what you like of me—but let my father's name alone.'

'And why? The Scroopes got up in the world, long since. But we Elliots stayed what we've always been—yeomen, proud to be such. Your father was here and there with my girl, till every man and child about the moor thought they were plighted. So they were—but not for marriage.'

'It's an old tale, best forgotten. If my father had his faults—by the Lord, he was always worth twenty such as you.'

'You're vastly like him,' said Elliot, with chill malevolence—'the same free carriage, as if you owned us all. You've never known a check, my lad.'

With that he turned his back, and Scroope shrugged his shoulders and went over the moor-crest and beyond. He forgot Elliot and his ravings by and by, as he left the high road and got into the heath—forgot everything, except that he and his dog were together, roaming the windy freedom of a wilderness where sometimes grouse got up, or snipe criss-crossed from marshy hollows. There was always the chance, too, that a hare would lop out of the intaken acres wrested from the moor.

Joy in rough shooting was inbred in Scroope. It was all made up of vagrant odours—heather, and boglands, and the bracken's pleasant reek as he crushed it down—of journeyings, often lengthy, between one shot and the next. The surprise, when at last the grouse rose and scurried low across the tussocked rises, was a boy's always, eager as if he handled a gun for the first time in a care-free life.

His retriever knew the master's mood to-day—Riff, the dog with a coat as black as midnight, the teeth sharp for adversaries, the mouth tender as a woman's when game was to be gathered up.

The sun was getting over Scantrigg Moor when at last Scroope took count of time again and found himself many a mile from home. The prosperous farmstead above, with its clumbered mass of byres and stabling, stood just beyond the farthest border of his own lands, and it had been always a second home to him.

'We're hungry, Riff,' he said, 'and we're going to see what Manor House can do for us.'

They crossed the last of the heather and the home-meadows. The door of Manor House, when they reached it, stood open. A friendly gleam of lamplight stole out into the gathering dusk, and a girl was standing in the doorway.

'Is that you, Rob?' she asked. 'Supper will be spoiled.'

'Never mind Rob. He's always late. We'll eat it all ourselves, Jess.'

'Oh, is that you, Mr. Scroope? Come in. I knew there was a good wind blowing up the moor; and it's brought you.'

The same sense of welcome always met Scroope when he came into the well-ordered hall, with its pewter, its beeswaxed panels, and the litter of Rob's guns and fishing-tackle strewn everywhere. Jess and her brother, who kept house together here, had been part of his life since childhood. As the neighbours said, they might almost have been relatives, except that they quarrelled so little.

Rob Blamire still delayed his coming, and Jess would wait no longer. All through the meal they shared, Jess was demure and friendly; but afterwards, as they sat together watching grey moths blunder through the open window and play about the lamp-glow, she showed a new self to Scroope. Friendship seemed changed to something warmer, more intimate. A soft-spoken word or two recalled some childish escapade that they had shared; a shy glance asked him to believe that it was a lasting bond between them.

Scroope could never remember afterwards the little she said, the more she left unsaid; but the thought ran into his mind that it was time Storrieth had a mistress.

He rallied sharply. If ever the moorside had bred a bachelor, it was he. And Jess Blamire would be the first to laugh at him if she knew what was in his mind. They had grown up together—brother and sister, almost—and Storrieth was well enough. Yet in spite of himself the thought recurred; and Jess watched him soften to this mood of her own making. And then Rob entered noisily.

'We've left you nothing, Rob,' said Scroope, his old, happy-go-lucky self again.

'That doesn't trouble me. I've had supper at Tranter's Ghyll.'

'After watching a cock-fight in the barn?'

'There's no such savagery left among us,' laughed Rob. 'Surely we know that, with a railway no more than twelve miles off and a constable to look to our doings?'

'Yes. But did your bird win?'

'He did. There never was such a fight—not even in the bad old days.'

Jess rose—quietly, as she did all things—and left them to it.

'Tell Mr. Scroope how it went—all the horror, till your bird crowed for victory. Men thrive on such tales; but women sicken.'

'Something's wrong with Jess,' said her brother, filling Scroope's glass and his own. 'She's watched many a cock-fight in her time, and revelled in it. She's not of the squeamish sort.'

He forgot his sister the next moment. Point by point he described each turn of the battle in the barn, till his own bird looked down on the red storm of feathered death that had been his adversary. Scroope followed the story with eager zest and wished he had been up at Tranter's Ghyll.

They wandered presently into talk of old times and new, till grim tales followed merry, and pathos threaded many a half-forgotten story. Then Rob Blamire glanced at his guest with odd diffidence.

'We were talking of you, up at Tranter's Ghyll.'

'Well, you know me by this time. What was it, Rob?'

'It was about you and Steve Elliot.'

'Steve? I met the old fool up the moor to-day, and he cursed me heftily.'

'He's laid by, you fancy. So he is, in one way—but his wits are keen and crazed. Cattle of that sort are dangerous.'

'But what could he do?'

'What couldn't a madman do, feeding on a dead quarrel till it's poisoned his brain? If it had been a live fight, with blows to back it, we'd have relished it. But Elliot is daundering with shadows.'

'He can talk, and does. That breaks no bones.'

'What's at the back of my mind is that Steve will do more than talk, one day soon. Hate like his could drag him hobbling to your stables, if it took him a week to do it, and keep him doggo till the house had got to bed. Then he'd fire it for you. And the one fault of old houses is that they burn fast and merry, once they start.'

Scroope grew attentive. He remembered Lone Fir, and the glee with which Elliot had shown the cracks in its stout trunk—recalled the venom in the man's voice, the shrill and bitter hatred.

'Perhaps you're right, Blamire.'

'There's no perhaps about it. Steve Elliot is as full of devilry as an egg's packed with meat.'

Scroope shook the trouble from him with an impatient jest.

He had always found, in his careless life, that the best way with worries was to deny that they were there.

'Not so easy about it, Roger,' said Blamire sharply.

'Oh, man, be quiet. The whole countryside knows that there's nothing to choose between us, so far as lightness goes. And there you sit, with a look of Methuselah about you.'

'It's because their tongues were so busy after the cock-fight in the barn. They've watched Elliot at his antics, and the gist of what they said was that there are times when a man has to warn himself or else be warned by his friends.'

'Poor old Steve would be flattered, if he knew. Let's forget him. And, Rob, we'll have a day on the moors to-morrow. You're giving too much thought to a cripple on two sticks, with maggots in his brain.'

'I'd like to believe it—so I will,' said Rob, yielding to the mood that both shared by second nature.

It was late when Scroope got up at last; but Jess came into the lamp-lit hall as Rob was saying good-night to his guest. Little and soft, elusive, she trusted no harm would come to him on the long road home to Storrieth. There was a moon to guide him, she added, with the same air of solicitude.

'And Riff at my heels,' said Scroope.

'Riff is only a dog, after all. You think too much of him.'

'Only?'

Somehow, in this warm, comfortable hall, with its memories of old friendship and the girl's eyes kind with him, Scroope was aware of misgiving. Deep in his heart there was thunder-weather brewing up. Steve Elliot had traced, with a fury tense and horrible, the storm's wounds on the body of Lone Fir. Rob Blamire had carried on the tale of some ruin creeping up to Storrieth by stealthy ways. And Jess was part of the havoc, somehow—Jess, who had scampered with him up the moorland glens. She had been a comrade once; and now she seemed to be less and more than that.

When Scroope had gone, whistling Riff to heel, Blamire turned to his sister.

'Why did you leave us, Jess? In one of those quiet tantrums of yours?'

'I was tired.'

'Not a bit of it. When I came in there wasn't a scrap of tiredness about either of you.'

'You chose the wrong moment to come in. You were always a blunderer, Rob.'

'Oh, that was it?' he said with brotherly frankness. 'There's nothing lost, anyway. It was plain by Roger's face that I'm to have him for a brother-in-law before long. I'm glad, Jess.'

Practical and hard as she was, Jess had yielded for a moment to the sense of misgiving which had troubled Scroope. He had been tame in her hands, until Rob spoiled it all; but to-morrow he might be his careless self again, wedded to liberty, and dogs, and horses.

'Why are you laughing, Rob?' she asked sharply.

'I was thinking of a day when we came over the moor. You were ten or so, but knew your own mind even then. We stopped to look down on Storrieth and I offered a penny for your thoughts. I shall always laugh when I think of what you gave me for the penny.'

Jess left all doubts behind. That far-off day was clear to her own memory too.

'I said I'd be mistress of Storrieth when I grew up. So I shall. Manor House is good and proud, but Storrieth's better. A woman always wants to get up in the world.'

'But it's Scroope himself you want now. I saw you together, Jess—and you'd take him if he hadn't a roof over his head. That's the way I'd like a woman to care for me, if ever I had the luck.'

'Yes, Rob,' she said gently. 'It's the man I care for—not the house.'

CHAPTER III.

THE DEAD HAMLET.

SCROOPE did not choose the short way home across the narrow moorland paths. Clear as the moonlight was, it played strange tricks even with the men who knew every bog and marshy hollow by the soberer light of day; and the longer highway track was easiest.

He swung forward with long strides. The sandy roadway was firm and soft to tread. The waste lands stretched before him and behind, to the right hand and the left, fold after never-ending fold, hazed by mists of silver-grey. The road strode care-free as himself. Now it would run for a half-mile of level athwart the naked heath, then drop like a plummet sheer to a wooded stream-way where owls were hooting through the moon dusk. And now again, untiring, it climbed fiercely to the further heights and met the lashing wind.

Scroope—and Riff glued to his heels—were part of this lone and savage land. Scroope had known it all his life. So had

the dog. Both had been suckled at its breasts in infancy. And ever as they climbed and dipped, and mounted once again to meet the swift and eager wind, the old happy strife of being alive glowed in their veins and would not be stilled.

The Blamires' pleasant table, the sudden impulse that had stirred him to give his house a mistress, seemed remote to Scroope. He needed no wife. Storrieth and its lands—the moors and the striding highways—what else did a man want?

In this mood they came, he and Riff, to the hollow where Pallins Kirk, little and old and grey, stood under its sheltering rowans. It served a parish of scattered homesteads perched on the hilly slopes, and had done so since earliest tradition began to speak down the ages from fathers to their sons.

This church of the stout walls, stalwart in its loneliness, was linked with Scroope's earliest memories. He halted now, listening to the rustling of the rowans overhead as the breeze sobbed between their slender branches; and for the moment, laugh at himself as he might, something of boyhood's trepidation seized him. How often he had needed, in those far-off days, to whistle as he came through the Yard of Dread. So many hauntings lurked within its walls, by common repute—not least of them a soft and piteous murmur that came between the wind-beats. It was known as the Sighing of the Sleepers, and man and dog both yielded to the fancy that they heard it now.

Riff was the first to shake off this dismay. He growled suddenly, lifting his head in challenge; and presently a step sounded on the grave-stones, laid flat and huddled so close together that no weeds could grow between.

Scroope, snatching too late at the dog's collar, cursed Riff to heel, but he paid no heed. He had run with bared teeth to meet the wayfarer who had stepped from the shadows into open moonlight.

The man showed no uneasiness. 'Down, friend!' he said, and stood there while Riff made a circuit of him with ominous, low growls.

As Scroope sprang forward, the stranger waved him back with cheery unconcern.

'All dogs are friends of mine, when we get to close quarters. He is testing the smell of me. And now those fine teeth of his gleam no longer in the moonlight. And, see, I give him my hand to lick, instead of my leg to bite.'

Jealousy, quick and unreasoning, came to Scroope. Riff was his own dog—his alone—reared to keep all other men at a distance. And now he was fawning on a stranger.

The traveller read his thoughts, perhaps. With the gentlest smile he said that this gift had always been his. Dogs liked him; that was all. He could explain it no more than poets could tell one why they sang.

Scroope took stock of the stranger. Lean and of middle height, there seemed nothing remarkable in any way about him except his self-assurance and an extreme smoothness that suggested guile.

'You're late on the road, sir,' said the stranger, after an uneasy silence.

'And you?' snapped Scroope.

'Am late, too. I am seeking a woman in distress.'

'The devil you are? And what has that to do with me?'

'You may chance to live in these parts,' suggested the man.

'In that case, tell me if there's any village near.'

'Yes—half a mile forward. But it's a dead village.'

'Dead?'

'And out of mind.' Scroope found pleasure in feeding the other's quick dejection. 'Once there was a water-mill in Tring, and busy looms. Then they left it—and it began to die. Last of all, there was only Jake Middlemass living there, in a bit of a cottage. He was good at the mole-killing and a rare poacher. Then he died, too, and nobody's left in Tring.'

'So there's no use searching there. And there's no other village?'

'Not within miles.'

'Nothing but farmsteads perched on these confounded hills? I never guessed that roads could be so steep and endless. And you would know if a stranger was sheltering in any of these houses?'

'Most likely. News travels fast among us.'

'You are growing impatient—but just one question more. What is the time? I've lost count of it, and have no watch.'

Scroope held his own watch up to the moonlight. It had stopped while he was at Blamire's, and obviously lied when it said the hour was five minutes past ten. With a shrug of the shoulders and a cold word of regret he was passing on, when the clock in the belfry tower above began to strike.

The two men stood silent, counting the strokes. One, two—forward to ten, eleven, twelve.

'Why, it's midnight,' muttered Scroope, and glanced sharply up as another stroke rang out into the fitful fretting of the breeze.

'I've no sort of superstition myself,' laughed the stranger—'but I can see that you have. I never heard of a clock striking thirteen before. Something's slipped in the works, no doubt.'

Scroope was silent for a while. It was as if he had been plunged without warning into a dark, chilly pool, where lithe and unclean things twined round his limbs and pulled him down. The nightmare ended sharply, but not his memory of the depths. He was ashamed to have shared it with this glib-tongued stranger, and nodded a curt good-night.

The stranger, with quiet malice, whistled Riff to his side and laughed as the dog stood halting for a moment before Scroope's summons brought him half reluctantly to heel.

'I've a way with dogs,' he said, and went tip-tapping over the close-set gravestones, and through the lych-gate and out into the moon-haze.

Scroope did not expect to meet the man again. It was idle to resent his intrusion into a moonlit journey home to Storrieth—idler still to resent his beguilement of Riff. Riff was penitent now and clung to his heels with desperate, still tenacity. Yet Scroope's dislike of the man went with him. So did memory of the black moment he had passed through in the churchyard. Nothing had prepared him for it; it had leapt at him out of the shadows, that thirteenth stroke, as if a clock's vagaries mattered.

He threw off superstition presently, and swung forward up the road. The churchyard had put fear into his boyish days, and lads grown to manhood were apt to fall back into such remembered dreads. This was all the excuse he could find.

'We're a couple of fools for our pains, Riff,' he laughed—'you for licking a stranger's hand, and I for listening to a clock.'

The night's stillness lay about them as they climbed the hill, and a deeper silence rested on the lost hamlet known as Tring. It lay below them, the moonlight flooding its tranquil hollow. A cluster of half-ruined buildings, hazed by distance, showed like the remnants of some ancient castle guarded by a moat; but these took clearer shape as Scroope went down among them.

What had seemed a moat, and afterwards a lowland tarn, showed itself for what it had been once—a mill-pond, feeding a water-wheel below. The sluice-gate, broken and mossed over, let the waters go as they willed, past the rotting timbers of the wheel—past the mill-master's house and the cottages where his people had made loom-cloths from the fleeces of sheep bred on neighbouring uplands. All spoke of a bygone day, before steam conquered water-power and drew men to the far-off towns.

Scroope had no patience with Tring's past. Commerce and looms, and all they stood for, were dead here in the forsaken

hamlet; and he was glad, in his haphazard way, that the feet of trade would never come this way again. If the hamlet had prospered, gaunt chimneys and foul, smoke-ridden streets would have filled the hollow by this time, climbing always further up into the moors. But Tring was dead.

In this mood of careless thanksgiving, he turned the bend of what had been the mill-master's garden and went down the track. Ryther Burn, prisoned no more by the broken mill-sluice, raced in steep cascades to the ravine below. A clump of cottages, perched half-way down the gulf, lay in a pool of tempered light. The moon, big and cloud-free, shone straight on the broken roofs, the upright walls. As if Tring itself had not been secluded enough, some of those old-time workers at the looms had built their homesteads here, hidden still deeper from the world.

Scroope glanced down as he went by. All was as he had known it—the ruin and the peace of Tring. Then a wisp of wood-smoke came up the ravine, with the tang of pine logs in it. Somebody was alive in the hamlet, it seemed.

He stood watching the smoke roam and eddy, till it cleared into a straight, blue line that came from the chimney-stack of the last cottage. Jake Middlemass had lived there, and a random thought came to Scroope that the man's ghost would break back from any world he'd gone to, just for a glimpse of a lurcher-dog and the smell of rabbit poaching nets. But phantom hands could not kindle a wood-fire on this deserted hearth.

As he watched, a glow of lamp-light shone suddenly from the upper window. Somebody was moving about the room, throwing fitful shadows on the curtains that had not been there in Jake's time. Then the light disappeared, and showed again at the lower window. And presently the door was opened to the moonlight.

Riff growled quietly, but Scroope silenced him and watched again. He had no sense of spying. It was simply that he was helpless in the grip of destiny, as he had been when the clock of Pallins Kirk struck thirteen instead of twelve.

He saw a girl come out into the moonlight. A half-grown puppy followed her and bit at her skirts, and gambolled foolishly. The girl's voice as she chided him rang out across the quiet of the dell.

Riff barked, jealous of the master's interest in anything except himself, and the girl glanced up with sharp question. Scroope was so close above her, the moon's light so keen, that he read every fast-changing emotion as clearly as if she spoke to him. Terror, mingled with abhorrence, showed first. She seemed held by a trance of

panic. Then hope showed fitfully, as still she gazed up, her eyes intent with him as he stood against the wide background of the sky above. Her terror lessened. Startled dread gave way, by slow degrees, to a relief that only half believed it could be true.

Then she drew back to the cottage door, and shut it so quickly that the puppy, left outside, whined piteously. The door opened again to let him in, and through the din of Ryther Burn came the grating of a rusty bolt as it was driven home.

A woman in distress. Scroope remembered the stranger he had met at Pallins Kirk a short while ago—the little, smooth man who had ruffled him unduly. He had the key to the riddle now.

He stayed on, watching the mists drift and eddy in grey wisps across the stream, deep below him. He saw the light shine out again for a while from the upper room of Jake's cottage, then disappear. A troublesome, unwelcomed pity came to him for the girl who was sheltering there—alone, except for a half-grown puppy.

Where did she come from? Why did she need to hide in this lost and eerie hamlet—to hide from such a glib-tongued rascal as the stranger who had so lately talked with him?

The tale of the chase was plain enough. She had fled into the loneliest highlands that offered safety; and the man had pursued, finding the track here and there, like a sleuth on trail.

Scroope, in that moment, took up a quarrel. The stranger had been as near his prey as the half-mile from Pallins Kirk to Jake's cottage here; and he had missed her. He would miss the track till doomsday, Scroope told himself, so far as his own help went.

He got out of the hollow, and up into the grim lands bordering Storrieth. Riff, close at his heels, whined now and then, restless and uneasy.

'It's home, lad,' said Scroope sharply. 'What have she and her wood-fire to do with us?'

CHAPTER IV.

THE WELL.

THE moor above Storrieth on the next day was still ablaze with crimson, and the sun shone on it from a cloudless, thirsty sky. The two figures crossing the heath moved slowly, and at every step the heather dust rose in thin, hurrying clouds beneath their feet.

'I'm tired,' said Wee Daunt, mopping his ruddy face.

'You would be,' snapped his mother. 'You were that way from the start.'

Whose fault is that ?'

The question came sharp and quick. In the man's face was a menace, as of fire that had smouldered long in secret and broken through at last.

The woman looked at him. Strong of mind and body, fearless at most times, a queer dread surprised her now. She had reared him as her slave ; but slaves rebelled at times.

'Not mine, lad,' she said, with a sharp cackle of laughter. 'D'ye think I'd have gone through birth-pains for such as you ?'

The lash of her tongue whipped him to heel again, as of old. And together they sought shelter where a little glen dipped under its rowans to the shadowed peace of Goblin's Well. They were less than a mile from home ; but their throats were dry and they longed for spring-water.

A lean old man was standing at the well-side. He had a stick in each hand to steady his bent figure, and was throwing a scrap of paper into the spring that flowed upward sharply to the well's brim and then as quickly ebbed.

'Curse Roger Scroope and his lands, and all he eats and drinks,' the man was saying. 'Curse his goings out and his comings in. Make his bed ill to lie on when he cries for sleep. If he weds and has bairns, may they bristle like thorns in his side and prick him day and night.'

'Why, Mr. Elliot, that's been my prayer,' cackled Eliza Daunt ; 'but I never found wit to name it rightly.'

Elliot came slowly out of his trance of hate. Great caring had gone to this rapt mood of his. In his bones, deeper than the 'rheumatics' that palsied them, was the old quarrel with the Scroopes. His one living hope was to die tranquilly after compassing the ruin of all at Storrieth.

'It's been your prayer, too ?' he echoed. 'I never guessed that you had aught against the Scroopes.'

'I let few neighbours guess what I have, or what I haven't. But if you hate like that, Steve Elliot, you might be useful to me.'

'Ay, that's you,' he said, a flicker of harsh merriment crossing his wrinkled face. 'Eliza Daunt gives nothing without expecting to get.'

'True enough. I'm proud of my common sense. If I'd been giving instead of getting all my life, I shouldn't have bought my bit of a farm—and where would Wee Daunt have been by now ? I've sheltered the lad, and fended for him.'

The dwarf was 'in one of his moods' to-day, and bunched his great shoulders up till his neck was hidden—a trick of his when stirred by sudden temper.

'Shelter? I never wanted it. I'd like to fend for myself and go about, hearing all and saying little, till I learned what I need to know.'

Elliot watched the spring rise to the well's brim, stay there for a moment purling and bubbling, then withdraw to the mystery pool that fed its ceaseless flow and ebb. His bit of paper, with Scroope's name written on it, did not return with the waters; and he took this for a happy omen of disaster to the house of Storrieth.

'What d'ye need to know, Wee Daunt?' he asked.

'Who fathered me.'

'Well, now, that's a hard question for the wisest sort to answer. Your mother could tell, but she won't.'

'Maybe she will one day,' said Mrs. Daunt. 'Maybe we're running the same errand, us two.'

'And I'm running mine,' broke in the dwarf. 'I heard mother say last night I was hers. I lay awake on my lonesome and listened while they talked. And just now she said she'd never have troubled to bring such as me to birth.'

'You're mine and you aren't, laddie,' said the woman. 'Truth always has two sides to it—same as there are two sides to your face. As for you, Mr. Elliot, you hate Storrieth so that it leaves you thought for nothing else?'

From the hidden deeps of the man a flood of passion bubbled up, like the well-flood he was watching.

'You should know by this time, Eliza Daunt.'

'Tell me again what it was all about.'

She was playing on the madness that had grown, day by day and year by year, with his lonely brooding on his wrongs. The storm that broke about her carried no dismay. She just waited till it ended.

'Scroope's father did as he liked with my girl. Listen to me, Eliza Daunt. They call this Goblin's Well—but its old name was the Cursing Well, and I like it better. You write a name—say, Scroope's—on a bit of paper, and send it down to hell with a prayer to back it. And that's cursing, fair and square.'

'Yes, we all remember how old Scroope had his way with your daughter. It's the common talk of the place, as you know. Nay, you needn't fly at me like a wild cat.'

The old man borrowed strength for a moment to stand upright

and shake a crazy stick at her. Then his pains took him again and, bent double, he glowered at her with grim malevolence.

'If I'd my strength back, woman, you wouldn't be standing there with your smirking face. You'd have every bone in your body broken.'

Eliza Daunt faced him tranquilly. Comely and erect at sixty, her skin fresh as a girl's in spite of weather and farm labour, there was little to show that she, too, had an undying enmity against the house of Storrieth. She had learned to hide such secrets as a lapwing hides its nest.

'I'm no fool, Mr. Elliot. And I wasn't smirking. That old happening was enough to have driven you mad.'

'Then why nag at a raging tooth?'

'Because there's been a rumour, all these years, that your daughter said she was married to Scroope. And I want to know if that was true.'

'Married?' snarled Elliot. 'When she couldn't hide what had happened any longer, she wrote a letter saying she was wife to one she dare not name because he had bidden her keep it secret.'

'I could name him, if I would.'

'So could I, woman. Nobody who'd seen Scroope and her together could have had a doubt. She put the letter in her room the night she left us.'

Again he watched the Cursing Well ebb and flow, flow and ebb, like memories of the years gone by.

'Maybe she spoke truth, Mr. Elliot.'

'And maybe she lied, as women do when they get away with their shame.'

'Yet women have a queer liking for sacrifice of all kinds, specially for the man that's theirs. I got over that complaint myself long since; but she was young.'

'Why couldn't you let her name be quiet? You bring the night she left us right back to mind. There was a nor'east gale and hail driving at the windows. I lay stark awake and listened to it, never guessing *she* was out across the moor.'

And now Mrs. Daunt was sure of one thing. The man's voice, when he said 'she' was out across the moor, his whole bearing, betrayed his love of the daughter whose tragedy was still food for awed gossip. Her memory waked and slept with him after more than thirty years. So much was plain.

'I remember that night,' she said. 'I was in service at Caisterby. It lies in a bit of a hollow, as you know, but even there the wind

rocked the chimney-pots till we fancied they'd ding through the roof above our beds. I'd have been sorry to turn a dog out into such a storm.'

'Ay. It was fit only for a Scroope—and he who sent my daughter over the moor lay snug indoors. D'ye wonder that I curse all the Storrieth spawn?'

'I never have wondered at that. It was a cruel journey for her—cruel—and she in the state she was.'

'Well, she died, and the child with her. For that much news I was bitter thankful.'

'You would be. So near her time—and the night journey with a gale plucking at her bones—what chance had she? A crippled life she'd have had to the end, if death hadn't come quick o' mercy, as they say.'

'Why d'ye soften me?' snapped Elliot. 'There's never been one in all these years to get at the heart of my trouble as you're doing now. And it softens me, I say. I'd rather be hard as a millstone to the end. It's easier that way.'

Wee Daunt, weary of their talk, had turned his back on them, a hunched, sorry figure of a man hugging some dream of his own for comfort. And the woman, after a glance at him, spoke low and soft to Elliot.

'I wouldn't sit by gravesides of any sort myself, as you're doing. Your daughter's dead. The quarrel is dust and dry bones by now, they say—but is it? All these years I've tried to get the threads of a tale into my hands, and I've failed. I like to work lonely and rely on myself; but two can plot better than one. I see that now.'

She leaned closer to his ear; and what she said roused him to sudden, eager life.

'There may be a great dream coming true, Eliza Daunt,' he said. 'Though I go on my two sticks, there's naught amiss with my wits.'

They glanced up sharply. Scroope of Storrieth, after his day's shooting with Rob Blamire, was riding home in his own haphazard fashion, taking hill and break-neck drop as if they were level ground.

'He'll ride to Storrieth's finish just like that,' snarled Elliot.

But Wee Daunt, as he watched Scroope swirl out of sight in a dust of his horse's making, had no enmity—only a wistful longing that he had been straight of body, too, and lithe to sit a horse.

All through his life the little man had wanted to be like Scroope. He could not be, and knew it. There was no rankling jealousy—only this queer sorrow in his heart, to see a stalwart riding past.

(To be continued.)

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN.

FROM THE LIFE OF SIR JAMES MACKENZIE.

BY DR. R. MACNAIR WILSON.

SIR JAMES MACKENZIE, early in his career as a family doctor in the country, witnessed the death of a young mother in childbed from heart failure. From that moment he became obsessed with the idea that he must learn how to foresee danger in heart cases. Finding that the knowledge he required did not exist, he set about obtaining it for himself. He determined to note all the symptoms usually associated with heart trouble which he should encounter, and then follow up the patients showing these symptoms to observe what happened to them. He called this 'the method of Wait and See.' He also determined to try to discover the mechanism of symptoms, *i.e.* their mode of causation.

In ten years, by the use of these two methods, he had completely worked out the hitherto unexplored subject of irregularities of the heart's action. His discoveries obtained a world-wide reputation, and he was hailed in America and Germany as a prophet. Yet he knew that he had not solved his real problem—the acquisition of the power to foresee the onset of heart failure. All that he had discovered was that irregularities of the heart and 'murmurs' may or may not indicate a grave state of affairs.

At this juncture he suddenly realised that the earliest signs of heart failure are not to be found in the heart itself, but in the feelings of the patient—in the sensations of pain and breathlessness on exertion. The recognition of this 'guiding principle' instantly enlightened his darkness. He felt that a world which had admired his earlier gropings after truth would welcome with rapture this great revelation.

He did not know his 'world,' though the fact that the leaders of English medicine had largely ignored even his early researches might have prepared his mind for disappointment. The 'giants' of his profession were not accustomed to look for enlightenment to country doctors.

'There are three stages in the history of every medical discovery,' Mackenzie told me once. 'When it is first announced people say that it is not true. Then, a little later, when its truth

has been borne in on them so that it can no longer be denied, they say it is not important. After that, if its importance becomes sufficiently obvious, they say that anyhow it is not new.'

He was speaking with a twinkle in his eye, but I knew that his own experiences lay behind this statement. He added, after a moment: 'All my early papers and writings were refused by the leading medical journals. Years passed before I could even obtain a hearing.'

Mackenzie bore the editors of these journals no ill will for this early neglect of him. He had not expected that the views of a general practitioner would be presented to the great world. With singular modesty he sent some of his papers to a local medical journal circulating in the North Country, and counted himself happy when they appeared in its pages. They attracted little or no attention. Thus it happened that, at a moment when the complete elucidation of some of the most baffling secrets and mysteries of the heart was actually lying printed on obscure shelves, the giants of the profession remained lulled in the comfortable belief that knowledge about this organ and its diseases was complete. They taught their cut-and-dried doctrines about back-pressure and 'compensation,' and the dangers of murmurs, to admiring students, and they dispensed the fruits of these doctrines to patients, not less impressed by their capacities, in their consulting-rooms. 'The Man of Burnley' saw, and set his teeth. The truth began to dawn on him that if his discoveries were to be made available to his professional brethren and to the world he must, himself, carry them into the strongholds of the giants.

That idea seems to have entered his mind first about the age of forty-five, just when his studies of irregular action of the heart were nearing completion. At this time he had acquired a considerable local reputation among general practitioners, and was being called out a good deal in consultation, both in the immediate neighbourhood of Burnley and also in districts more remote. He had, further, addressed a number of local medical societies, and had delivered a paper in Manchester, where he had been favourably received. But these, as he saw clearly, were no more than parochial successes, whereas the message which he had to deliver was for the ears of the world. It became, from this time forward, his sincere conviction that the world had need of his message.

Some visits which he paid to London and to the Continent confirmed him in this view. He found that the true nature of

heart failure—as he had come to realise it—was not understood by heart specialists. These excellent men seemed to be unaware, even, of the need of such knowledge. They acted on opinions which the Burnley doctor knew as a positive fact were mistaken opinions, gross errors. They viewed with grave anxiety cases which he regarded as trivial, and they classed as trivial other cases which filled him with uneasiness. He was no longer willing to bow to such opinions. He had tested them in long days and nights, in a hundred humble homes, in the factory, in the workshop. And he had found them wanting. To have accepted them merely because they were endorsed by superior authority would have been to sin against the light that was in him; to have retired from the field, now that the truth had been given to him, would have been to play false to the sick and suffering to whose service he had dedicated his life. Mackenzie realised that he had got to fight, that for the sake of his own soul he must join battle with the giants.

His first definite step in this direction was the publication in the year 1902, when he was forty-nine years of age, of his book 'The Study of the Pulse.' A book differs from a paper or article in this respect—that it does not require the consent of an editor before it can see the light of day. And the publishers of medical works are far less under the influence of the 'prevailing opinion' than are usually the editors of medical journals. The latter are doctors themselves, and are usually obsessed by the idea that they must, at all costs, maintain their reputations for wisdom and gravity. Publishers, on the other hand, are men of the marketplace, with an instinct for business. They continually take risks in the matter of new and unorthodox books, which do them great credit. Mackenzie, like many another man, reached the public whom he sought to influence behind the backs of the 'Press.'

It is a fact which deserves emphasis. Every student of the Press, whether general or technical, knows that the reputations of newspapers are made in active conflict with authority. It is the papers that dare, in the name of humanity, to defy the giants which live and grow strong and exert influence. This lesson is always being enforced. It is too often neglected. Thus a paper which, in the beginning, was nurtured on intelligent opposition to the powers-that-be, frequently grows respectable and dull, echoes the views of authority, or becomes their apologist, and dwindles to insignificance, its place being taken by an organ the

'violence and vulgarity' of which strike terror and dismay to polite hearts.

It so happened that, when Mackenzie began to write, some of the more influential of the medical newspapers were entering on a prolonged period of that kind of good behaviour which makes some schoolboys popular with some schoolmasters. Butter would not have melted in their mouths. A general practitioner with a theory of his own, which conflicted with the prevailing doctrine, had about as much chance of entry to those journals as had a naked savage of supping with the Byzantine Emperor. Harley Street would not have liked it. The giants might have frowned.

His book, on the other hand, went forth unperceived by the giants. It soon came to the hands of men who were truly interested in the message which it contained.

'It is,' wrote one of his own partners in Burnley, 'a masterpiece of individual work, conducted absolutely by himself. The facilities he had of exchanging views with other medical men were very limited, and books of reference were not easy to obtain. Burnley was somewhat isolated in those days by a bad railway service, and motor cars were in a very early stage of development. . . . It was Mackenzie's custom, in any case which presented special features, to get the patient to come up on Sunday afternoon for further detailed examination. On these afternoons was established a kind of heart clinic, and nothing delighted the doctor more than to get his friends, who were interested in this work, to come and see these cases with him and discuss the symptoms they presented, or wring from them some explanation of the tracings he would show them. Among others I remember coming for the week-end were Dr. Osler (the late Sir William Osler), Professor Keith (Sir Arthur Keith), Dr. John Hay, Dr. Ritchie, Professor Cushny, Dr. Arnold Lee, Professor Wenkebach, Dr. Ross of Toronto, and Dr. Cohn of New York. The last two stayed some time with him, and he kept them hard at work investigating heart cases. My part was, more particularly, to relieve him of the drudgery of the routine work of the practice, and I received the greatest encouragement and consideration at his hands. His fame was now rapidly spreading, not only beyond the Burnley area, but outside the county itself. He was kept extremely busy with consultations which sometimes entailed long railway journeys.'

It is pleasant to think that while the giants slumbered men destined to fill the most commanding positions in their profession

actually journeyed to Burnley, in spite of the bother and difficulty of so doing, in order to learn the new doctrine from the lips of its author. It is pleasant to think of that brilliant company, the names of which I have just quoted, gathered in the consulting-room at Bank Parade, and I have often called up the picture of the eager Mackenzie expounding his views to these zealous seekers after the truth. It was my great privilege and honour to make the acquaintance of the late Sir William Osler some years before the end of his life. I was struck, as all men were struck, with the bigness and the generosity of his nature, the goodness and the sweetness of the man. I realised then why Mackenzie always spoke his name with delight and affection.

'Osler,' he told me once, 'came to see me when no other among the big physicians would have dreamed of coming.'

He did not add, as he might have done, that Osler belonged to the New World, to Canada and America, more, perhaps, than to England. Nor did he point out that recognition of 'The Study of the Pulse' came from Germany and America and other foreign countries long before the giants had opened their sleepy eyes to glance at it. As I have said before, there was no vindictiveness in Mackenzie's character.

But the sleep of the giants was destined to be broken. The fame of the Man of Burnley came knocking unceremoniously at their bedroom doors. At a meeting which was held on the south coast, four medical men from Germany presented themselves. They had come, they said, to meet and talk with Dr. Mackenzie of Burnley.

At first nobody paid any attention to them, but their Teutonic insistence at last won its reward. They were informed categorically that there was *no such person*.

'But we have read and studied his book!'

'In that case,' said the giants, 'it is probable that he exists; but we can assure you that it is not worth your while concerning yourselves about him. We have not heard of him. He is not one of us.'

It appears that this reply greatly annoyed the visitors, for it is on record that they answered it thus:

'We have come here to meet Dr. Mackenzie, and not to meet you. We do not care about you nor your big men, who are all very small men outside of your own country.'

I give this statement as I have received it. The authority is

good. Certain it is that the four foreign visitors at once left the conference and betook themselves to Burnley.

That knock was followed by another. In 1906 Dr. Arthur F. Hurst, then Radcliffe Travelling Fellow of Guy's Medical School, wrote for *Guy's Hospital Gazette* an account of his first year in Germany. He said :

' Of all English physicians, the best known and most frequently quoted in Germany is, probably, Dr. Mackenzie of Burnley, a prophet who has hardly met, in his own country, with the recognition he deserves. The methods of studying disorders of the circulation introduced by him are much employed, and many important investigations confirming and extending his results have been published in Germany.'

It was evident that Mackenzie could no longer be ignored completely, and this the more so that he had been invited to make visits to Canada, America, and the Continent, and had accepted those invitations. Mackenzie went abroad; he crossed the Atlantic; he was hailed wherever he went as a seer and a genius. He returned home. Foreign physicians from America, from Canada, from Germany, from France, from Holland, from Scandinavia, came to Burnley to see his methods and discuss his problems.

But the giants did not come. They had heard of him. But was he not a general practitioner? In England, alone of all countries in the world, a man who has practised medicine among the common folk is regarded as having demeaned and lowered himself by so doing. The giants have no dealings with the general practitioners who presume to encroach on their fields of enterprise. Mackenzie wrote in his book on the 'Future of Medicine':

' There has arisen a tradition that only a select body of men are competent to fill a teaching post. This is the result of human frailty. If, in any sphere of life, a few individuals are set apart and given power over their fellows, it is but human that such a select body will seek to aggrandise their position at the expense of their fellows. It is unnecessary to enlarge on this general statement, as the world's history shows its truth in all spheres of human thought and action. In some spheres it may be good, or it may be bad, but in intellectual matters, and especially in science, it can only be bad. In medicine, the teachers have practically taken into their own hands the guidance of education and all the intellectual interests of the profession, and ordain the course a man must follow who wants to become a doctor.

'We have in London a body—the College of Physicians—which has acquired the power, indirectly, of preventing anyone who is not a member of their body obtaining an appointment as a physician on the staff of a teaching hospital. A young aspirant to such a post must follow certain lines which custom prescribes. He can exclude himself from having any personal contact with patients by spending his time in a laboratory undertaking what is called "research," and this is the surest way of attaining his object. He may spend his time in any other form of academic life, but one method he must not pursue—he must not attempt to qualify himself efficiently for such a post by the experience of general practice. If, for instance, he wishes to see the kind of life his future students would lead, or if he wishes to investigate the early signs of disease, and for that purpose undertakes general practice, he will, by such a step, render himself unfit for membership of the College of Physicians, and so cut himself off from any chance of obtaining a position as a physician to a teaching hospital.

'The College of Physicians practically requires of its members that, while they may pursue almost any one of the branches into which medicine is split up, they must not practise medicine in the only way by which a wide outlook may be obtained, and so render themselves fit and capable to become really effective teachers. . . .

'One special function of a consultant is to foretell what is going to happen to a patient if treated, or if left untreated. To obtain this knowledge, it is necessary to see patients through the various stages of disease, and this can only be done by the individual who has the opportunity. The College of Physicians thus prevents consultants following the only way in which this knowledge can be obtained. I have known laboratory-trained young consultants actually refuse to see patients regularly lest they should be considered general practitioners. When I have pointed out to them that they can never assess the value of symptoms unless they watch individual cases of disease for long periods, I have found them incapable of recognising the need for such knowledge!'

I hasten to add to this quotation the fact that the College of Physicians accepted Mackenzie into its membership and Fellowship, and that he was proud of both these honours. He wrote the words I have quoted long after his adoption. He wrote them in no hostile spirit, but only as a part of the campaign he was carrying out to open the eyes of his professional brethren to the need of including general practitioners among the research workers of his profession. Mackenzie could not be blind to the fact that had not the whole world acclaimed him he would never have been

honoured in his own land with the 'rank of a Consultant.' He knew that he had been 'made a giant,' because no other course was possible without stultification. And that was one of the reasons why, in his old age, he broke away from the ranks of the giants to enter on the most dramatic episode of his whole life.

The giants would not come to Mackenzie. He resolved to go to the giants.

He was now fifty-four years of age, a time when few men think of abandoning a safe and most honoured position in order to go crusading. The idea that he could fling himself into the complicated and difficult medical world of London and impose his views on a reluctant profession seemed, to say the least of it, an optimistic one. His friends, and especially those friends who understood most clearly the nature of the 'world' he designed to conquer, lost no time in trying to dissuade him. Their fears were written on their faces.

Mackenzie set these fears aside. He knew that unless he went to London his work would not be made manifest. Already he could see that his least important discoveries were being magnified, and his great principles—that 'true scent' which it had taken him twenty years of constant work to apprehend—were being ignored. He must go himself as an apostle of his principles, and from the vantage ground of Harley Street disclose them to the world. There was no other way.

I confess that, when I contemplate that great decision, I am thrilled with wonder. What courage the man possessed! And what supreme confidence in the power of the truth to prevail! He was far from being well-off. He had saved very little money. He had no private fortune on which to fall back. And his teaching was likely to make enemies rather than friends. How, in the great maelstrom of London, was he likely to fare without any title to fame other than the merit of his researches? Where were his patients to come from? Where were the doctors who would prefer him as a consultant to the knights and baronets whose names were familiar to the whole people?

He may have asked himself these questions. I do not know. They weighed very little with him, for he had seen his duty. He began to make his preparations for the great adventure.

No crusader ever set forth with a higher sense of the necessity of what he was undertaking. No crusader possessed a more exalted sense of the importance of his mission. Mackenzie went forth, truly, in the name of humanity and for the good of his profession.

Nor was he ready to avail himself of any means of assistance which might, even slightly, damage the great cause he served. He actually refused to sell his invention, the Ink Polygraph. It was manufactured in Burnley, and was marketed at the bare cost price by his express desire.

'Many doctors,' he declared, 'can ill afford to buy instruments at all. It would not be right to restrict the use of this instrument by enhancing its price; nor could I endure the idea of exploiting the scientific keenness of my fellow-practitioners for my personal profit.'

Behold the doctor, then, setting out from Bank Parade, from the house of twenty-six years, from the people whom he had served so faithfully and loved so well, to challenge the leaders of his profession in the greatest lists which the world affords. Quixotic, perhaps! Hazardous, without doubt. But surely an enterprise, nevertheless, worthy of knighthood.

There had been moments of exaltation in these last years in Burnley: the moment, for example, when the doctor knew that this teaching had found disciples in foreign lands; the moment when he received Osler, laden with his international honours, into his house; the moment when, in 1906, he opened the session of the Medical School at Leeds University with an address on the position of the general practitioner as a research worker, and was acclaimed by a distinguished gathering, which included Sir Berkeley Moynahan, as one of the pioneers of medical research.

But Leeds is not London. These provincial towns are warmed by a local patriotism to which the capital is a stranger. London would have fêted Mackenzie had he come as a visitor from the North to deliver a lecture or make a speech. He came as a man who intended to stay, and London remained aloof and cold.

He had taken a house in Bentinck Street at a high rent—a step which proclaimed how lacking he was in 'London wisdom,' how imbued with the spirit of Bank Parade, Burnley. The family established itself there after the kindly and simple fashion which had always characterised it. The man who had never known what it was to lack patients, to be free from incessant calls on his time and his skill, the man fresh from his triumphs in America and Germany, found himself, for the first time in his life, idle, unsought after, almost forgotten.

There were no patients now whose maladies he must watch, no dangers which he must foresee and guard against. There were

only acres and acres of streets, the din of a ceaseless traffic, the weariness of pavements, the loneliness which is London's familiar spirit. Set that emptiness against the glow of achievement which this man must have felt as he spoke to eager listeners in the famous clinics of America and Germany, and found himself recognised by these listeners as a great figure in their profession. Compare it with the high hopes of the last of the Burnley days, when the knight was dressing himself in his armour for the great encounter. Here, indeed, were the lists which he had determined to enter; but his challenge rang faint in this immensity. The giants, it seemed, had not perceived him.

The Bentinck Street house was very big and very expensive to run. There was nothing—literally nothing—coming in. The prospect that anything would ever come in did not seem to be very rosy, because, although doctors and friends had promised help, this might not materialise. Mackenzie lacked everything which is supposed to be necessary to the equipment of a giant. He was not a member of the Royal College of Physicians of London, nor did it seem probable that he ever would be a member. That meant that his chance of obtaining an appointment at any London hospital was as apparently remote as his chance of obtaining an appointment on the moon. Thus, he would never be able to teach students, or to exert much influence over general practitioners. Where, then, were the patients to come from?

'We were,' Lady Mackenzie has written to me, 'really and truly, *poor* people.'

Mackenzie seems to have viewed his poverty and his prospects with a serenity which few men could have achieved. He was engaged on writing his great book on the heart, and also a smaller book on 'Symptoms,' and he devoted himself to these tasks with all the energy at his command. His cheerfulness was never for a moment diminished, nor his faith overclouded. He had come to fight for his ideas, and he meant to fight for them with every weapon at his disposal. One of the things which amused him most at this period was the large number of former acquaintances who invited themselves to visit him and made prolonged stays in his house. These visits, which he would have welcomed at a later period, made serious inroads on the depleted family exchequer.

But he never complained, nor ever refused anyone his hospitality. When he had grown tired of writing, he and his daughter Jean, then a merry girl of fifteen, went for 'rambles in out-of-the-way

parts of London about which they had read or which they found attractive.' Jean knew his moods, and responded to them all, and the friendship between them became very close. The lure of the great city, its mystery, its immemorial magic, its grand and sincere simpleness, appealed to both these romantic and simple souls. They learned to understand London. They tasted together that sweetness of her spirit which all whom she has accepted count among their fairest experience. I like to picture them on these wayfarings: the rugged man, well advanced in middle-age, grizzled, full of his labour and his service; the slim girl at his side, with the spirit of youth in her gay eyes, truants together, for an hour, from the schoolhouse of life. And I suppose that these 'outings' must have recalled to Mackenzie's mind the adventurings in the woods at Scone, what time the knights and their ladies rode by on the four winds of history.

Poor Jean! Poor little gay girl! She had then but a few months left her of the glory and sweetness of her life.

I never saw her, and I never heard her father speak her name except on one single occasion when he told me abruptly that his daughter had died of meningitis. Lady Mackenzie has told me, however, that her death in 1909 was the most awful blow which ever fell on a brave heart.

'He was always thankful,' she told me, 'to be able to recall these "rambles" with her, and to think they had been so much together. She died . . . and all the light of life went out for us all in the Bentinck Street home. My husband could never endure to recall those last terribly sad days, and for a very long time his life was overshadowed.'

Jean, according to her mother and sister, was very like her father. Her mother told me that she could never concentrate on her work till they came to London, but that shortly after she went to Queen's College she suddenly flared out and became a veritable student, and shone as a worker. When she died they had a most touching letter about her from the Headmistress. She added: 'I think they all loved the gay young creature at that College.'

Her sister Dorothy has given me this little description:

'Jean used to write reams of poetry, which she would dash off, sitting in front of the fire. She loved writing stories, and illustrating them, and she composed a dreadful piece of music, and she

was a perfect mimic. She said to me once, looking into a mirror, "I'm not a bit pretty, but I have a *funny* face." She used to leave Bentinck Street for Queen's College five minutes earlier than necessary every morning to spend time talking to a mongrel dog that was always tied to the railings of a public-house on the way to school. Children and animals loved her, and she was such a generous-hearted gay child. When she was so dreadfully ill, there was never a word of complaint. I think all the doctors loved her, she was so brave and heroic, and such a young, grateful child. She was sixteen when she died. The doctors told my aunt that they had never seen anyone like my mother at that time. My father, afterwards, was more understanding, and more patient and more gentle than ever.'

I have invited the reader to this intimacy, because it reveals the character of the man whom I am trying to describe.

His daughter's death hurt Mackenzie so that his spirit was smitten; but the proud Highlander would not show his hurt to the world. With singular faithfulness he continued his labours on his books.

One of these, the greatest of them all, had been published in 1908 before the blow fell on him. It had, in 1909, begun to exercise that influence which stands with scarcely a parallel in medical history. It was selling, this bulky volume, entitled 'Diseases of the Heart,' like the proverbial hot cakes, so that a second edition was required the following year. It was also accomplishing for its author the miracle of miracles. It was bringing him patients.

Mackenzie told me himself that in his first year in London he earned £114. In his second year he earned more than £1,000. When I asked him to what circumstance he ascribed this remarkable 'jump,' he replied, 'To my book.'

He added, however, that he owed a great deal to the kindness of certain professional colleagues who exerted themselves on his behalf. One of these was Sir James Purves Stewart, who called one day at Bentinck Street and urged Mackenzie to accept an appointment as Physician to the West London Hospital. This truly amazing request filled the Burnley doctor with delight, and cheered him greatly. He afterwards became physician to this excellent hospital. A second request came from Dr. Frederick Price to join the staff of the Mount Vernon Hospital, Hampstead, then devoted to the care of cases of consumption. This request Mackenzie accepted. At Mount Vernon he completed his study

of the Dangerous Type of Irregularity of the Pulse, Auricular Paralysis, and worked out fully, along with Professor Cushny, the influence of the drug digitalis on this trouble. It was a necessary continuation of the work begun at Burnley. Dr. Price, in addition, advised Mackenzie to move into Harley Street, and offered him a consulting-room in the house where he lived. This wise advice was taken. Mackenzie gave up his Bentinck Street house and moved out to Northwood, in Middlesex. He rented a consulting-room—soon to become the most famous in London—at 133 Harley Street—paying for it the modest sum of £100 per annum. It was the back-room on the ground floor, and was by no means very large.

The great book fell among the giants like a live bomb. It was more than disturbing; it was devastating, overwhelming. Here was not merely a good account of the various diseases of the heart, but an exposition of diseases of that organ, unknown to medical science. And not that only. Each disease was illustrated by dozens of tracings; each had been analysed and examined with the most amazing care. About each there was presented the ripe and rich fruits of the method of 'wait and see.' Further, the method of 'true scent' and the researches on breathlessness and pain were fully described.

But these merits, great and signal as they were, were not the book's chief title to fame. Its chief title was its immediate practical utility. It afforded information which might be applied intelligently by any practitioner, and which must enable him to foresee or to discount danger. It was, thus, a new and most powerful weapon placed in the hands of the common soldier of the profession.

And therein lay its power to disturb the rest of the giants. Even the drowsiest of these great men realised clearly that this challenge could not be ignored.

Mackenzie had come to London to fight for his ideas. He had expected to fight for them, been sternly prepared to fight for them. He had expected, too, to suffer in that battle.

As I have said, these expectations were fulfilled during the first fourteen or fifteen months of his stay in Bentinck Street. But, when this time had ended, all his anxieties were miraculously falsified.

I do not suppose that Cinderella herself tasted a greater astonishment than came to the Burnley doctor. In a single night, as it seemed, every difficulty which stood in his way was swept aside. Those whom he had supposed he must contend with offered friendship

instead of battle. His opinions were hailed as the authentic revelation of truth. Every door flew open to welcome his approach.

If I were writing this account as the advocate of the leaders of the medical profession in London, I should say that they showed an extraordinary generosity. For a man whom they scarcely knew, they waived the most rigid rules of their caste. There was no obstacle which they were not ready to break down on his behalf. There was no honour in their gift which they did not heap upon him with lavish hands. Within an incredibly short space of time the Man of Burnley found himself invited to become the sole head of a specially created heart department at the London Hospital, to become a great teacher in a great institution. He found the entire resources of this hospital, one of the most justly famous in the world, placed unreservedly at his disposal. He found himself elected, eagerly, a member of the Royal College of Physicians of London, after an examination in which every possible facility was afforded him of displaying to the full his matchless knowledge. He learned that the Royal Society—the most illustrious scientific body of the British Empire, or, indeed, of the world—was about to bestow on him its coveted fellowship. So many honours, of so pure a lustre, had surely never before fallen in so short a time to the lot of any physician. That a general practitioner, but yesterday arrived from the provinces, should obtain them was amazing, incredible, unheard of.

Here, surely, was signal proof that Mackenzie had misjudged the character of the opposition to his views which he had already encountered from the London faculty! Mackenzie himself undoubtedly thought so. The kindness shown to him, the appreciation, overwhelmed him and filled him with gratitude. Humbly, according to his nature, he accepted the splendid and wholly unlooked-for offer which Lord Knutsford, the distinguished chairman of the London Hospital, conveyed to him. He accepted the recognition of the Royal College, the Fellowship of the Royal Society, the Knighthood which soon followed these professional honours. His heart glowed with kindly feelings and with the determination to requite all this goodness by every means in his power. A great joy possessed him. His teaching was now bound to reach the whole world. The principles for which he had laboured so long and so earnestly had already, it seemed, captured the minds of his brethren.

I possess a letter which Mackenzie wrote me at a later period of his life. It refers to a discovery he had just made, and to the reception accorded to this discovery. It runs :

'In the first flush of gratification, I thought our discovery would startle the world. I have been discussing it with a number of capable men, and they fail to grasp its significance; so I find I'll have to work at it a good deal until I get sufficient data to carry conviction.'

Mackenzie always over-estimated the eagerness of human beings to obtain enlightenment, judging them, in this respect, by himself. He accepted gratefully and gladly the honours they offered him, because he thought that these honours were accorded to his principles. *In fact, they were accorded to his polygraph.*

There, in his polygraph, and the tracings he made with it, lies the real explanation of his sudden leap to fame—and that not only in England, but in America and in Germany also. His polygraph was what it is the fashion to call an instrument of precision. The records he made with it were 'scientific data,' things which other men, similarly equipped, could make and examine. The giants realised this the moment they began to look into his work. These tracings could not be ignored; they were facts. Moreover, they were new facts. It was absolutely certain that every student of the heart and its diseases would take account of them.

This had, indeed, happened already in Germany and in America, where the tracings had been under discussion for a considerable time. Mackenzie's interpretations of the various waves had been tested by many of the most renowned investigators, and had been found to be accurate. There could be no manner of doubt that, to quote a certain cynical physician, 'this lucky fellow had gone for a stroll, and stumbled into a gold-mine.'

The Man of the Tracings, therefore, was a force to be reckoned with. He was 'scientific.' He was possessed of the key to great and most promising discoveries. It was felt, and felt honestly, that he deserved the very best which his profession could offer him. It was felt also—and, in saying that, I am not attempting to be cynical—that were honours not accorded to him, dishonour must befall the leaders of medical thought. Unofficial genius is the greatest of all the dangers which threaten official reputation.

The giants, in short, took their hats off to the tracings. Mackenzie thought that their homage was being rendered to his great principle that the efficiency of the heart can be measured only by its response to effort.

And thus a strange and most comic situation was brought about—a situation in which both parties believed firmly that they had conquered each other. The giants told themselves that a

good thing had actually come out of Nazareth, that a general practitioner had actually 'raised himself to the status of a consultant' by the adoption of scientific methods. Mackenzie, on the other hand, believed that his apostolic zeal had converted the minds of the giants, and brought them to a saving knowledge of the truth that the fundamental principles of medicine can be learned only in general practice. He supposed that, having accepted his principles, they would proceed, in a humble spirit, to amend their own ignorance.

His earliest addresses and lectures given in London show very plainly how convinced he was that the battle he had come to fight had been won at the very first round. He spoke freely and confidently of the 'new criterion' of the heart's efficiency, as though all his hearers had accepted this criterion. He dilated with zest on the power to foresee danger, which the power to estimate the heart's efficiency had placed in the hands of doctors. He talked about 'a touchstone of the significance of murmurs and irregularities,' as if the consulting physicians who listened to him had realised the deceptive character of these signs when regarded by themselves. And he made light of his tracings and his polygraph, in the honest belief that everyone understood, just as clearly as he understood, the limitations of these 'mechanical aids.'

In one of these lectures he pointed out that there are four stages in disease,—'the predisposing stage, the early stage, the advanced stage, and the final stage'—and remarked that the history of medicine showed that disease could best be studied by starting at the end and working backwards. 'It can be said,' he declared facetiously, 'that ample provision has been made for the study of disease after it has killed its victim.' Provision had been made also, on a generous scale, for the study of the advanced stage, but the predisposing stage and the early stage had not been studied, and hence the power to foresee danger was lacking. Mackenzie continued :

'If the conditions which predispose to, or provoke disease, are to be recognised, the investigator must have the opportunity for seeing the circumstances which led up to the invasion of the disease. It is manifest that neither the laboratory worker nor the hospital physician, who are the persons mainly concerned with research, has this opportunity. The early stages of diseases are, as a rule, insidious, and are indicated mainly by subjective sensations. The patient, becoming conscious that there is something amiss with him, does not, as a rule, seek help from the hospital physician,

but from his family doctor. The bulk of patients in the early stage of disease are never seen by those who are systematically engaged in its investigation.'

This was a 'call to repentance' with a vengeance. The Man of the Tracings was actually suggesting that giants were of small use to the future of Medicine, that their knowledge concerned only the late and hopeless stages of illness, and that, if they would achieve any worthy service, they must become as general practitioners—'family doctors'—or else attend the out-patient departments of the hospitals where early disease may, usually, be studied!

'Had I,' he said, in effect, 'been a giant and not a general practitioner, I could not have learned how to foresee danger in cases of heart disease. I might, indeed, have invented my polygraph, but, even so, I should have fallen into the error of supposing that that instrument and the tracings I took with it represented a real advance in knowledge. I should not have known, as I now know, that my study of irregularities of the heart was mere "muck-raking," until I learned how to test these irregularities by reference to the fundamental principle that the measure of the heart's efficiency is its power of response to effort, and that irregularities which do not impair this power are not in themselves of a serious character.'

The giants gasped as they listened. A bench of bishops being called to repentance by a freshly ordained curate could not have experienced a more lively amazement or a sharper indignation. Was this the man whom they had taken to their bosoms? Was it actually possible that the Man of the Tracings was unaware of the signal honour which had been conferred on him? Did he not realise that it was his tracings which had won for him his elevation to the peerage of his profession? Mackenzie answered them out of the fullness of his heart.

'What,' he asked, 'are the methods adopted to instruct students in the early signs of disease? In the hospitals, where all instruction in clinical medicine is given, the patients in the early stages go to the out-patient departments. Common sense would say, therefore, where the signs of disease are the most difficult to make out, and the hope of cure is at its highest, the most experienced physicians would be employed, and that all the aids of laboratory technique would be at hand to help in the recognition of the disease. In no teaching institution is this ever done. Here, instead, is placed the youngest member of the staff, lacking in experience, ignorant of the meaning of the signs, and incapable of eliciting

them. He searches carefully for physical signs, and if there are no physical signs, the patient is either discharged with a bottle of physic, or told to return from time to time until a physical sign is discovered; then, and not till then, is he sent to be under the care of the skilled physician; and then, and not till then, does he receive the assistance of laboratory methods in his examination.

'On the other hand, in the wards, where disease has advanced so far as to produce physical or other demonstrable signs, mostly easy of recognition, we have the trained physician, the research student, and all the paraphernalia of laboratory assistance.'

The giants doubted no longer. They understood, at last, that Mackenzie was attacking themselves. A wave of resentment swept their hearts, expelling those genial feelings with which, a short time before, they had welcomed him. To his great astonishment, the Burnley doctor began to realise that his supposed converts had never, in fact, been converted at all.

His first feeling, when this truth began to dawn on his mind, was one of indignation not less acute than that of the giants. When the indignation had passed, there followed a sense almost of despair. To think that his title to distinction in the eyes of his brethren should be the very kind of work of which he had spent his life proving the fallaciousness! To think that it was as the Man of the Polygraph, the Man of the Tracings, and not as the Man who had learned to Foresee Danger that he had been honoured! To think that the husks had been valued, while the fruit was ignored!

Mackenzie, however, was no man to give way to despair. His keen and ever-present sense of humour came to his rescue. He saw the comic side of it all, even while he regretted the pity of it. Once again, the mechanical device, Science, with a capital S, had triumphed over both mind and reason.

'In some respects,' he wrote, with a flash of ironical mirth, 'the ideas which led to the employment and adulation of these mechanical devices may be compared to those ideas which sometimes prompt the imitators of a traveller just returned from an unknown country. The traveller, let us suppose, has come back and told all that he has seen, and has, incidentally, mentioned that a certain type of boot has helped him in his journeyings. His imitators, without in the least knowing what he is talking about or understanding the significance of the new knowledge gleaned by him, begin to make improvements on the boot. *They hail him as the discoverer of a new form of footwear!*'

Mackenzie had come to London as a man with a message; he had been loaded with honours, which the bigness of that message

seemed to deserve. He found himself, suddenly, a mere shoemaker, singled out from his fellows because of the excellence of his soles and heels.

He witnessed too, the amazing spectacle of the whole company of the giants bending zealously over their lasts, diligent disciples, as they supposed, of a new teacher. In America, in England, on the Continent, soles and heels had become the hall-mark of what was already spoken of as 'The New Medicine.'

Mackenzie's displeasure against the giants was short-lived. This man harboured no animosities. Moreover, he came to understand that a giant can never be anything other than a giant. The good citizens of Harley Street and Wimpole Street thought as they did, and spoke as they did, and understood as they did, for the simple reason that they had never had any experience of general practice. Not one of them had stood, as he had stood, by the death-bed of a young wife, newly dead with her unborn babe in her womb, and realised, with awful searching of heart, that the power to foresee the danger which had overwhelmed her was not in his possession. Not one of them had felt the need of the power to foresee, as every family doctor experiences it on every day of his working life. Mackenzie said to me once :

'I have no quarrel with Harley Street, except that it is Harley Street. It is concerned so much with those who are stricken to death, so little with those who have just begun to be ill, that, as a rule, there is nothing to foresee. Thus, the vital and tremendous importance of the power to foresee is overlooked.'

True science, the 'science of medicine,' as he delighted to call it, must, Mackenzie realised, deal with 'essential symptoms' first. The difference between his method and that of so many physicians was simply this : Mackenzie had spent twenty years finding out which are the essential symptoms in cases of heart trouble, whereas his colleagues had not even realised the need for this knowledge. They were careful and troubled about many things, whereas one thing only was needful. They looked for a hundred signs ; but the sign that mattered, the pain on effort which revealed the failure of heart-power, they did not look for, and did not observe, though it was the most obvious feature of the case.

That point illustrates perfectly Mackenzie's dispute with the giants and their satellites, the men of the laboratories. At this hour, very few of either of these groups of medical men have realised the nature of the charge which he brought against them. They seem to think that he was attacking laboratory methods as such,

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That point illustrates perfectly Mackenzie's dispute with the giants and their satellites, the men of the laboratories. At this hour, very few of either of these groups of medical men have realised the nature of the charge which he brought against them. They seem to think that he was attacking laboratory methods as such,

and exalting what they contemptuously describe as the 'put-out-your-tongue' type of practice. They do not dream that what he was really attacking was failure to think, to reason, and what he was really exalting was the common sense which asks, 'Is this heart capable of its work, and if not, why not?'

I saw an illustration of the same kind of thing once when a research worker explained to Mackenzie that he was not sure whether or not the small blood-vessels of the skin are under nervous control. He had, so he declared, attempted to study the matter by examining the web of a frog's foot under the microscope.

'One can see the blood moving in the small vessels of the web,' he explained.

Mackenzie nodded. 'One can also,' he observed, 'see a girl blushing when the name of her lover is mentioned.'

That common-sense answer, I think, displeased the man who heard it. But it seemed, nevertheless, to settle once for all the question whether or not the blood-vessels of the skin are under control of the nerves. Frogs' feet were never, in Mackenzie's mind, a good substitute for the faces and facial expressions of men and women.

Now by the irony of fate, and through the scientific accuracy of the recording instruments he had first invented, but which he had transcended by his own skilled touch and illuminating experience, he found himself, to his horror, regarded as the Founder of a School, the inventor of a method of recording symptoms coldly detached from the discriminating mind which could award to each part of the record its real value. He found himself a 'giant' of Harley Street, and meditated a stimulating retirement to general practice. Only there would the physician discover the earliest symptoms of disease, namely the feelings of man and woman. This step was delayed by the war, but after the war—in which he did wonderful work for those suffering from 'Soldier's Heart'—he retired to St. Andrews to enlist the aid of the general practitioners, who saw the first danger signs of incipient disease, and to carry out for other diseases the method of observation which had led him in the course of the patient years to a revolutionary knowledge of the heart.

And here he organised the work which is to go on as the living monument to the man and his methods—a work the object of which he defined as 'the prevention of the diseases that are common among the people'—more than half of which have causes still unknown to medicine.

A BALLAD OF ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

So solemn is St. James's Square,
 The very sparrows, prinking there,
 Set to a sort of Byrd-like air
 Their ceaseless tweet and twitter ;
 There, guarded and resplendent, wait
 The gleaming chariots of the great,
 Catching on winking paint and plate
 The sunshine's vagrant glitter.

No panting lorry, towering bus,
 Disturbs with raucous hoot and fuss
 The stately calm that circles us
 Within the selfsame portals
 Where dwelt the great of ancient day,
 Who trod their straight and spacious way ;
 They never seemed to want to play
 Like neo-Georgian mortals !

When men and motors are asleep,
 When little errant moonbeams creep
 Along the silent streets, and peep
 At William, primly riding ;
 When shades of Castlereagh and Pitt
 Beguile the night with classic wit,
 Still lighter, brighter figures flit
 Between the trees, a-hiding.

Oh ! ghosts of serious men of State,
 Whose virtues we commemorate,
 Marking, on pastel-tinted plate,
 Where each illustrious shade is ;
 You will not grudge a truant sigh
 For smile and wile and wistful eye,
 Gay and disdainful, wise and shy,
 Your sweet, forgotten ladies.

K. C. G.

BIRDSONG AT EVENING

BY N. M. GUNN.

I.

'DON'T let yourself go to bits—if you can help it,' said Tompsett, eyeing the somewhat shrunken little figure of his fellow-clerk. 'You can't say but I always warned you!'

Blue eyes clouding, Philip Pope smiled vaguely.

'Yes,' he acknowledged, smoothing his bowler with thoughtless anxiety. 'Yes.' Then he cleared his throat and made a forceful effort at buttoning the middle button.

But it was Tompsett who first stretched for the handshake of good-bye, who wished Mr. Pope 'happy days' in his retirement, though when it came to his, Tompsett's, time, there fortunately were interests beyond the clerical desk which they had for so many decades occupied in neighbourly tenancy. Yes, nothing to beat a thorough-going hobby! . . .

As he drifted down the street to his lodgings, a queer lightness came to Mr. Pope's feet, an uncertainty to his knees. His packing was finished. Had been for days. With a strange sense of unreality he moved about the somewhat disrupted diggings, barking his shins now and then on obtrusive angle of box or packing-case, discovering an overlooked razor-strop on the back of the bath-room door, approaching the window a score of times to see if his cab were coming.

An unreal evening altogether; so that it was not until the following morning that he finally realised he was cut adrift from—a lifetime.

And at first blush the realisation came to him not unhappily. His watch by his bedside told him it was precisely twenty minutes to eight—as it had told him first thing in the morning for over forty years. Twenty minutes to eight—heave off the bedclothes—pivot out the legs.

Mr. Pope lay still, eyes on the little window with its glowing yellow blind. He listened. A bird was singing on a tree down the little garden in front. A rumbling of cart wheels, a thudding

earthy sound as of someone striking a potato-pit with the flat of a spade, the clatter of a bucket. . . .

He took it all in, the strangeness of it—and lay still. He was not to get up for another hour. Nothing to call him now, to compel him to get up. He was his own master. Bedroom, sitting-room, all found—for twenty-five shillings a week. And his departmental pension ran to £125 p.a. Not to speak of the bank nest-egg. Wealth enough—and just as inexhaustible as himself.

Yet his legs twitched. He turned over to make himself more comfortable. Ah, splendid! . . . But presently he yawned and looked at his watch again. Five to eight. Pity, after all, he hadn't set breakfast a little earlier. Such a fine morning! At eight—he pivoted.

He would take time over his shaving. He dawdled and hummed. Hum-um-ummmm. . . . But he was still early on going downstairs.

'Couldn't resist such a fine morning, Mrs. Gill,' he apologised timidly.

'Any hour as suits, Mr. Pope,' replied the kindly woman, smiling with excellent good nature. 'I hope you had a good night?'

'Splendid! Like a top!' he assured her brightly.

'I'll get your breakfast in a jiffy. Heard you stirring.' And she bustled off.

He rubbed his hands, looking round upon his private den of a sitting-room. Hum-um-um-ummm. . . .

Breakfast over, he strolled gently forth. He knew the place just well enough to find it at once familiar and strange. Down the little garden, noting the gold of crocus and green spears of sprouting other things (which were daffodils), and so to the road. The road declined gently to the little town, but for him the country and a child's memory of a wooded stream.

He walked on. But as he walked he found himself curiously unable to collect his thought and concentrate it on the world around him. It came more easily to concentrate on—Tompsett pulling a ledger from the rack and posting up. He saw his rather bold writing, the decisive, curly way he finished off his 3's and 5's. Poor Tompsett! On such a spring morning! He took off his hat.

He fanned himself with his hat, though the air was cool enough. The exercise was unusual and his legs trembled a little. He sat down. From the belt of trees that wound with the river came a

wonderful outpouring of birdsong. He listened and nodded. Delightful accompaniment to fresh air and freedom! Tompsett would be telling them that he, Pope, would be going to bits. Poor Tompsett!

He returned from his walk a little tired and sought the comfort of an armchair. Even with its lack of springs it was grateful. Lunch would be in—let him see—one hour and a half! For a moment something like dismayed astonishment gripped him. Then his face cleared. Delightful, of course! In the afternoon he would go for a walk up the other side of the stream. Time—he had tons of it. . . . An hour or so later—‘I’m just fiddling about,’ said Mr. Pope aloud and unthinkingly. Then he paused in his aimless pacing and listened to the echo of the words in his mind. ‘I’m just fiddling about,’ said the echo, and looked rather queerly at Mr. Pope.

II.

By the end of a fortnight Mr. Pope knew both sides of that stream for a considerable distance pretty intimately. He also knew some other things, but so very intimately, those other things, that he could not as yet admit them to himself. It took one of these afternoons that occasionally invade the rigorous youth of spring with sultry languors, thunder-laden clouds and oppression, to draw a little of this self-knowledge from the secret places.

Hat in hand, the small figure shuffled on. Every now and then a handkerchief mopped at the beaded perspiration. The mouth had relaxed to permit an easier passage to breathing which had become a little noisy. A shuffling figure, sagging, curiously—could it be?—pathetic.

But if pathetic, then not so much from external appearances as from a something of struggle and make-believe, that shone mistily in the blue eyes, with that mistiness of a pained questioning.

Suddenly a dizziness obscured his sight, flushed warmly across his brain. He let his uncertain legs go, and sat down. ‘I—I’m going to bits!’ gasped Mr. Pope, eyes rounding at the ironic and inscrutable fates.

But once an admission of that sort is made it bears an immediate and deadly fruit. Back in the seclusion of his little sitting-room he personified ironic and inscrutable fate in the figure of Mr. Tompsett. Tompsett’s inevitable ‘I told you so!’ laughed

at him from Tompsett's very mouth. 'I told you so, Pope!' He saw the face, the brutally friendly omniscience in every line. 'I warned you!'

And, for the moment, he gave in. The fight was too much for him. He could not look at supper. He went to bed.

But Tompsett's omniscience followed him there and guessed at his most secret thoughts and half-thoughts. Terrible intrusion this, torturing. Left just this to be said—he had had nowhere else to go. A bachelor clerk of sixty cannot have much in the way of a home or relations to welcome him—and he must go somewhere.

But the country? There was the rub! Had he thought, down in the secret romantic depths, which never get quite filled up with the debris of life, that he might find a haven of paradisaical rest there, like those chaps, Mr. Polly and so on, whom the writers wrote about? Had he been lured vaguely, without knowing quite what to expect, but hoping—hoping for the something of dream, the impossible, indefinable something that would suit him?

As he tossed about, the bedsheet crawled up to his neck, got into his mouth. He pushed it back violently, as though it were choking him. And 'You ought to have had a hobby!' said Tompsett.

Next day and for many days these words of Tompsett's haunted him. He began to hate Tompsett. He watched him pull out ledgers, heard the efficient thud of them on his desk, saw the pages flutter over, felt their texture, studied the names, the columns of figures, greedily. Tompsett had a way of going up a column with deliberate and even strides of his pen. He watched him at it for long spells, fascinated.

Ledgers, the shining desks, the clean briskness of the morning, the lunch hour that came so quickly, the final desk-clearing, the evening paper. A day that went like clockwork, the occasional gossip, the clerical mistakes, the mild scandals—all departmental, intimate. A smoothly running clock, ticking things off to the perfect second. To Mr. Pope it suddenly seemed that all that wasn't work, it was—it was—'a hobby'!

Four mornings thereafter he said to Mrs. Gill:

'I'm taking a turn into the city to-day. Be back last train.'

'That's right, Mr. Pope! See you enjoy yourself!'

He flushed as he read the reticence in her eyes which signified he had been moping and should enjoy himself. And the flush held as he went down the little garden, down the road to the city.

His legs felt lively, his body lighter, his eyes shone clear of their mistiness. He spoke to no one. He asked for his ticket quietly. He had the utterly foolish fear that someone might guess his insane intention, and the earth would not then conveniently open and swallow him up.

He avoided the haunts of Tompsett and the others, though a sudden access of swagger had tempted him at the lunch hour to revisit the old café. But his caution or fear had prevailed, and at eight o'clock that night he staggered up the garden path, heavy pack on his aching shoulders, not caring whether he had had food that day or not, utterly played out, but excited—with a curious and secret and half-shamed streak of happiness winding in and out the excitement.

Mrs. Gill greeted him presently, nodding with a smile at his twinkling eyes; nodding again later when she observed how supper had been dealt with.

'I was just saying to myself that I was sure you would be the better of it,' she said.

'Yes,' said Mr. Pope. 'Yes. And, by the way, Mrs. Gill, I—I should like breakfast at eight. Knock at twenty to—if—if that would suit you? I've always been used——'

She nodded amply.

'Surely, Mr. Pope. It would suit me even better. And habits are habits, as my old mother used to say.'

That evening, until midnight, in the secrecy of his sitting-room, Mr. Pope was busy, both with the magical contents of his pack and with his dreams; finally busy with the bottom half of a bookcase which had a lock and key. From midnight he slept like a log, yet at the first knock on his door he was awake. Two minutes he lay, then, throwing back the bedclothes, he pivoted.

Shaved, dressed, breakfasted, and at 8.15 was toddling down the garden path. At two minutes to nine was toddling up the garden path. At nine prompt he was alone in his sitting-room, breakfast things cleared.

He did not hesitate. Humming a snatch of melody, he went across to the bookcase, and, stooping, pulled out a new, large leather-bound volume. With a gentle thud he deposited it on the writing table before the window. Picking up the black wooden penholder from the somewhat ornamental inkstand, he deftly snicked out the old nib, replacing it with a shining and familiar new one, which he wetted skilfully. Then he set himself before his—ledger.

III.

It was his solution to the problem: ledger, account books, desk, the old routine. Pathetic? It is hard to judge.

For the problem is constant, and, in bitter hopelessness, Mr. Pope saw himself as one of the unimaginable army of finally discharged clerks, 'pen-pushers,' whom the vast silence and aimlessness of retirement appal at first, then settle down upon as a deadly blight, slowly to stifle, to kill. Tompsett's plea for a hobby was but earnest of the horse sense that humanity squeezes out of generations of common experience.

Yet now, Tompsett, had he seen, would have guffawed at length and called upon his gods to strike him pink before the high drama that was enacting itself by the little window which looked out upon a garden with two trees and a singing bird. For horse sense is, after all, a subtly (or grossly) different thing from that ruthless logic which is the true, if sometimes pitiless, possession of artists and dreamers. And in his small way Mr. Pope was a dreamer, a logical builder of intimate little visions, wherein he moved with a simple artlessness, wherein he *saw* himself move, if mostly with that shamefacedness which besets all dreamers who are not conscious artists.

But this fresh spring morning he was not conscious of anything at all beyond a surging, lawless pleasure, flooding a deep-down sense of awful folly. And when he, in a sudden flash of dazzling inspiration, caught at the singing bird on the tree, his hand shook and his body positively trembled where it sat.

For this was to be no mere duplicating of what he had done for over forty years. The set of books was complete, and in the space for the firm's title he had inscribed in beautiful penmanship the sign—'Philip Pope.' He had hesitated over clothing the curious bareness, the naked inadequacy of the name, with an '& Co.' or 'Ltd.', or both. But a conservative sense of the fitness of things had prevailed.

And then, looking up from that first inscription, he had been met by the notes of the bird. Wonderful notes, that sang to the strange thing that was now singing within himself. An extravagant expenditure of notes. . . . Notes, eh? Golden notes! . . .

His hand, as has been said, shook, his body trembled, inspiration dazzled. His clients would be, not the meaningless, lifeless names of nearly half a century, but—birds!

He got up abruptly from his desk. Oh, monstrous and egregious folly! Oh, madness! He walked about his sitting-room not knowing he walked. Myriads of birds, each one of them with his varied and wonderful notes, his inexhaustible stores! What accountancy, what variation, what intricacy of detail, to unravel, to set down, walk by walk, day by day! Madness—sheer! And at last he collapsed from exhaustion—of the body, not of the mind. For the mind went on, working by single and double entry, feverishly, gluttonously, drunkenly.

Presently there was a knock at the door and he jumped guiltily, slamming the ledger shut, and turning in such a way as to hide it. It was Mrs. Gill. It was—lunch!

Life had begun again.

That afternoon, the following day, many following days passed as in the vivid tension of a dream. Sun and weather and a cleaner blood brought tan and a faint glow to the parchment cheeks. Until an afternoon came when he went down the road to the little town, and, pulling himself together, entered the library.

She was a young woman, the lady behind the counter, with dark hair over a pale forehead, dark attractive eyes, an expressive oval face. She smiled to Mr. Pope, a slow quiet smile. He felt unaccountably drawn, and cleared his throat.

‘I want a book,’ he managed.

She waited.

‘About birds,’ he amplified. For he had come to realise the pressing necessity for inquiry into the credentials of his clients.

‘This is the catalogue, but—your ticket?’

Mr. Pope hadn’t a ticket. Well, he couldn’t get a book without a ticket. Did he live? . . .

‘Yes, I stay with Mrs. Gill up the road.’

Then it would be quite simple. He would fill up this form, get Mrs. Gill and another householder to sign it, and bring it back. Then a ticket would be issued.

‘Thank you very much,’ said Mr. Pope. He hesitated uncertainly, as though the kindness in the dark eyes were as mesmeric as the attraction.

‘If you are anxious to get a book now—well, I could give you one, if you’d be sure to come back with the form at once. Bird books are not often asked for.’

‘Thank you very much, but—not at all. I—I’ll get the form. Shouldn’t like—’

'That's all right.' She handed him the catalogue.

He began to fumble through it. She saw his uncertainty and, quietly leaving the desk, returned with four volumes.

'Perhaps one of these—'

His gratitude made him momentarily inarticulate. One volume, with rather beautiful coloured plates, completed his silence. He caught at it.

'Your number,' she said, turning from a ledger, 'will be 2701. I'll note that now, if you give me your full name.'

He left the library with a supreme sense of the beneficence of life; and returned within the hour, form duly completed.

'I am very grateful to you,' he said, and their eyes met and smiled.

Every day saw his gratitude grow deeper. Spring was in full spate. Bird singing had become individual competitions in ecstasy. Mr. Pope was surely the busiest man within a vast radius. For his clients were busy, extraordinarily busy, and miraculously elusive. Moreover, the coloured plates, gorgeous as they were, were often baffling. The different finches, for example; the tits. He mopped, he followed, he crawled. He listened, he watched, he studied. And out of chaos came, little by little, order. Seeing nothing, and from the evidence of his ears only, 'Ah, a robin!' he would pronounce, with nodding pride. The curiously deliberate, faintly plaintive little song enthralled him. 'I could pick out a robin's song anywhere,' he would add.

Though again, the difference between blackbird music and thrush music baffled him for a long time. He was frequently making mistakes. Until at last—he noted down, after a sweating struggle for adequate words, certain characteristics. And that was the beginning of a thrilling new interest.

Slowly the ledger grew to exhibit the most curious patchwork of figures and haphazard paragraphs.

'The starling,' wrote Mr. Pope, 'is not to be trusted. He draws on various accounts not his own. He is a forger and a mocker. To-day I thought my new friend, the stone-breaker, had shifted his stance. But I was wrong. A glossy, speckled starling was guilty of impersonating. I must see if Miss Storey has any book on the starling in her library. I hope she does not consider my frequent visits a trouble. I thought last time I called upon her that she looked weary. I hope nothing is worrying. For the world is beautiful in a way that I was quite unaware of hitherto. How extremely withdrawn is Tompsett!'

And when he had written the paragraph, each sentence having first been carefully 'tried out' in his mind, he read it over and over, and glowed with the absorbing reality of it—yet finding space in his secretive pleasure to hope the best for Miss Storey and to twist a flick of pity at Tompsett.

Wonderful life, wonderful account keeping. His leg muscles were positively developing; his health, his sense of well-being, as he had never known it.

And life was not only wonderful: it was cram-full of adventures, even adventures of the most physical. For in the case of the bird there are three distinguishing features: song, plumage, and egg. And in such new exercises as tree-climbing, Mr. Pope found difficulty. Behold him, for example, waiting on the dusk, skulking home by field and hedgerow, and being—for luck is not always kind—encountered by Mrs. Gill in the garden. The sidling, the retreating backwards, the fatal tripping over the doorstep, so that the guardian hand is dislodged from a position astern where a deadly rent running the full curvature. . . .

Enough. The wonder is he did not some time expire from over-hasty acceleration of his untried heart. Life was a debauch.

And the spring went on. And the birds had even less conscience than Mr. Pope. From the silvery pinnacle of the dawn to the hushed hollows of evening they pursued their aerial arabesques, their flashing riotous loves, their nest-building and singing, their spring madness.

Enter the cuckoo. And Mr. Pope 'skipped' lunch.

At the library, which he reached ten minutes before closing time, Miss Storey assured his slightly dishevelled *empressement* that there was quite a literature on the cuckoo.

Mr. Pope licked his lips. It was as he thought; he could rely on her.

But how far short of the mark had been even his thought of reliance, his belief in her! Pause may not be made to inquire into the something of simplicity and sympathy, of vision, that mutually attracted. The too fatal understanding in her eyes, her dark, soft eyes. Something a little too soft about her, perhaps; something also, as he had previously noted, increasingly 'worrying,' troubled, as though the darkness of the eye had got ringed by an outer faint-blue darkness.

But he missed the uneasy note altogether as he almost staggered from the library. For his mind was aflame. His shrunken body had taken wings to itself, and soared above its staggerings; while

his lips muttered, over and over, what her lips had spoken, as, with a smile, she had laid a volume or two before him—'The cuckoo told his name to all the hills.' She had introduced him to the poets!

It was too much. Too much at one fell swoop. 'The cuckoo told his name to all the hills'! . . . 'Oh, my God!' said Mr. Pope in the throes of a sort of divine agony. And he abandoned himself to a green mound on the uplands beyond Mrs. Gill's. There, hugging his knees like the very shrunken ghost of a very long-dead Viking, he gazed stonily down upon the winding river-belt, where all day long he had hunted—

'No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery. . . '

And suddenly there came floating up to him in soft mellow mockery, 'Cuck-oo! cuck-oo!'

But fortunately for Mr. Pope it was the sort of debauchery that is after Nature's own wild heart, and she saw to it that his slumbers were of an exquisite and profound exhaustion.

IV.

It will readily be understood that meantime the affairs of the firm were getting into a somewhat muddled state. Time that the managing owner held some sort of solid stock-taking to see more or less where he stood. Some weeks passed in this onerous occupation. Knowledge had to be detailed and precise. A rather formidable Latin nomenclature presented a difficulty, but his mind had had always that love of orderliness and precision which is of the essence of all true scholarship. Figures and paragraphs gave way for some pages to trees that were charts of orders, families, sub-families, genera. Beyond doubt an indigestible business, dry—but curiously prideful. 'Ah, the robin,' would nod Mr. Pope, '*Eriihacus rubecula*.' Whereupon a small lump would roll up from his heart to his throat. . . . '*Eriihacus rubecula*.'

Such pride might be held by many to be the beginning of the end—if not of all things, at least of the poets, of the magic.

But within a week he was back at the paragraph again, at this paragraph:

'A kingfisher and a grey wagtail—in one day! The firm totters on the brink of insolvency. I have found the ravishment

of this day the severest yet. The grey wagtail *hovered*. I can say no more. It was a space between trees by the edge of the stream, a space of sunlight between green. And he hovered with the sun on him. When he went, I crawled to the edge of the stream to rest there. And as I rested, lo! there came upon me, darting up-stream, a living blue-green jewel. A kingfisher—no other! And was gone. It was too much in such a short space of time, and it was accordingly late before I reached the library, where I hadn't been for some time. Consider my surprise to find another in Miss Storey's place. I am afraid I must have shown even stupefaction. I know it took my slow mind some time to understand that she was gone for good. It meant that she would never come back. Moreover, there was a look on the face of the thin, elderly woman in her place, a shrewish look, so that I am left with the feeling that I crept from her presence—certainly without asking for a book. A kingfisher, a grey wagtail—and Miss Storey gone. I do not know what to think. I cannot plan.'

Mr. Pope's mind became a jumble. From his pleasure in the use of the word 'ravishment' (a recent acquisition) to the disturbing knowledge of Miss Storey's departure, his mind jumped about aimlessly. He became restless. It took him very much longer than usual to fall asleep. Moreover, he dreamed. And in his dreams Miss Storey's face got mixed up with the face of a little boy who had climbed a tree for him some days before. In his dreams they were nesting together, he and the little boy who was also Miss Storey. The partnership was perfect; for the little fellow had keen eyes and climbed like a sailor; while Mr. Pope imparted his knowledge with a wonderful and thrilling skill, consciously (if pridefully) suppressing the Latin, but most aptly laying a casual finger on the poets!

His eloquence awoke him before his time; and in his disillusionment he tossed about. But in due course he pulled himself together, and got up purposefully. He was in the act of drawing on his trousers when he heard voices by the garden gate.

'The wanton!' pronounced cutting feminine tones. 'She with her college training and all her orders! Corrupting . . .' But Mr. Pope, who had been balancing precariously on one leg, overbalanced, and by the time he had got his legs disentangled Mrs. Gill was sighing:

'Ah well, the poor thing——'

'Poor thing, indeed!'

'I mean,' began Mrs. Gill hurriedly, 'I mean——'

But her visitor had apparently no great interest in Mrs. Gill's meanings.

'It's just what I warned them. And that's for the vicar! And she won't open her mouth, the hussy! And even before she came here she must . . .' The high-pitched voice choked. 'I don't know how she could have had the face!'

'The vicar's in for a rough time,' thought Mr. Pope to himself with a whiff of the old departmental humour, as Miss Grainger minced off down the road, her thin nostrils no doubt scenting battles from afar. She was an elderly maiden lady, an active worker for the Church, for the Church Militant.

But this intrusion of worldly bitterness did not help Mr. Pope's restlessness. Indeed, it increased it. 'Interests,' human or Tompsettian, had never been his strong point. And now that Miss Storey should have failed him, leaving, as you might say, a grey wagtail and a kingfisher on his hands . . . it was—it was 'wanton.' The unexpected word banished utterly any wry flicker of humour, hung itself up in his mind, stared upon him. Of course, it was Miss Grainger's word! His mind had merely reproduced it, as his mind was getting into the habit of doing with words that struck him as new and arresting.

But the word stuck all through breakfast. It was not merely arresting: it was sly and sinister. It mocked him. It could tell him a thing or two—if he would give it the chance! It leered at him round odd corners of his mind. It dared him. But he was loyal to Miss Storey. The association was colossally preposterous. 'And yet . . .' leered Miss Grainger's word; leered Miss Grainger herself.

Even the bacon lost its savour, and Mr. Pope set forth under half ballast, so that his journeyings became fitful and purposeless. There were no entries made in the ledger. No new observations.

At supper-time his voice suddenly took command of him and said to Mrs. Gill, who was 'clearing':

'I see Miss Storey has left the library.'

Mrs. Gill looked at him in a certain way.

'Yes,' she said. 'Yes.'

But now he could say no more.

'I suppose you heard?' said Mrs. Gill, lingering.

'No.'

'It's all the talk. Miss Grainger's hot about it.' She paused. 'There wasn't an inkling beforehand.'

'What—what was it, Mrs. Gill?'

'She's had a child,' said Mrs. Gill.

Mr. Pope's flesh stiffened, the jaw dropped, mouth coming agape. Then as the intelligence got to work, a warm flush crept slowly over his body, over his face, and his eyes looked anywhere but at Mrs. Gill.

'No one noticed anything,' said Mrs. Gill.

And in a wild search for something, anything, to say, Mr. Pope heard quite mad words forming conversationally in his brain to the effect that he had not noticed anything himself. But he managed to choke them back.

Mrs. Gill lingered.

And he knew that she lingered with expectations of discussing the matter, simply and to the point, as folk of their age should. Cramped ligaments began twisting and knotting; a sensation of lockjaw held his mouth.

'She hasn't been here that long; just nigh on eight months,' said Mrs. Gill.

He got his head to nod with what seemed a ponderous stroke.

'And she won't tell nothing,' concluded Mrs. Gill.

Then after lingering a little longer with no noticeable encouragement, she mercifully went; and Mr. Pope's flesh relaxed.

His body allowed its freedom, his mind a full rein, he gave himself up to a sort of monstrous wonder. Between the chairs, round the table, up and down he went, breath held, breath hissing in prolonged escapements through his teeth, astounded, incredulous, yet curiously conscious of some underlying warmth of humanity, of a sensation that linked him somehow with the incredible happening itself, as though the dark eyes, the subtle enigmatic weariness and sweetness, the soft smooth face, were there before him and could be touched.

And as the incredible, astounding element waned, the warmth, the humanity, waxed, so that he felt himself very near indeed to the dark mysteries of life's inner temple. Could smile, out of a strange understanding and prompting of the heart. . . . Mrs. Gill had treated him in the open way she had, as though he stood for the weighty incarnation of all male experience and citizenship. . . .

Thought whirled disjointedly, and twice he unknowingly barked his shins. But if thought could follow no rational paths, vision became ever clearer, particularly that near vision of Miss Storey's face. It fascinated him. It drew him. It beckoned him. To what? Hardly in the nature of things to Miss Storey herself, but certainly ever more strongly to that central sympathy

and understanding wherein all self-knowledge, manhood itself, lay. The marionette figure of the withered little clerk performing his daily little tricks on the parchment surfaces of life—how unreal, remote, with this maelstrom of the dark currents of the blood whirling there within his fascinated vision; nay, with its vortex sucking at the shores of his own heart!

A new birth. Definitions as yet were beyond him, but life's significances continued to grow deeper, more intimate. Even bird life. He studied their nesting loves and habits with a profound attention. Their singing held something more than notes; here and there touched ecstasy, touched poignancy.

V.

Some weeks later, Mr. Pope, instead of stretching carpet slippers to the evening fire, changed them, as he had done the two previous nights, for boots. He had the aspect of a man preparing for a very special board-room conference, whereat, judging from certain eye-glintings, something in the nature of a personal triumph might, without immodesty, be anticipated.

Carefully he studied the waning light from the window and plainly adjudged the darkness not yet near enough for his departure. Drawing forth a ledger, he read over what had been last written therein. He read it again, lingering here and there, lingering particularly over the concluding sentences, '... so that the darkness has its greatness equally with the light; and in many ways surpasses it, for there is a mystery and gathering together of thought in which the body sits as still as a deep pool...' on to the concluding phrase, 'and in the darkness of itself there is no evil,' as though he were already half-consciously formulating a higher criticism!

Presently he set forth, heart throbbing a little, body keyed up, and in due course found himself by the belt of trees that wound with the river. For some ten minutes he held steadily on an upward course until, coming by a certain pathway as landmark, he struck into the enveloping darkness of the tree-belt. Hands outstretched, he groped onwards, slowly, carefully, until the grey-glooming stillness of a silent river pool drew him up. He recognised a special tree-trunk, and, feeling for a small heap of dried bracken at its foot, he sat upon it and waited.

And it came in the end—the song of the nightingale!

Crouched over his knees, eyes lost in the profundities of the grey-glooming pool, he delivered himself to that song, became utterly possessed by it. And, as though conscious of the inarticulate soul of the listener, the singer gave of his magical best.

Gave too much for the frail human vessel at the tree-foot to hold, so that a drowsy numbness caught at Mr. Pope's spirit and sank it Lethe-wards as though of hemlock he had drunk. . . .

Until the moon, newly risen, caught the darkness and the spirit in a glimmering net, and drew the freight, meshed in white witchery, to shores in faëry lands forlorn. . . .

Echoes of poetry and lovely meaninglessness travailed groping, a strange exquisite poignancy. . . .

Abruptly the song ceased. There were scattering of branches on the outer edge of the tree-belt, a body brushing its way through, a whimpering suddenly stilled. . . .

Mr. Pope came back to the river bank and the grey-glooming pool, startled ears suddenly straining to altogether earthly sounds. Nearer, nearer, coming straight for him, till at last there glided in upon him the hooded form of a woman carrying something at her breast, till the moonlight caught at the pale ghostliness under the hood and revealed to the glaring eyes of Mr. Pope the undoubted features of Miss Storey.

As though 'all the ends of the world' were come upon him, his body froze into the stillness of the trunk by which he sat. Twisted up and stiffened, not unlike a malformed tree-stump himself, he crouched there, all volition gone, gaping, grotesque.

Her hood slipped from her hair, and for a moment her face, uplifted, shone spectrally under the moon. Then it drooped over the bundle at her breast. There was movement there, a little querulous whimpering. She slid to her knees, and, head buried in the bundle, remained thus in a communion so still, so awful, that Mr. Pope became aware suddenly of his heart turning over in him, then whirring, and swelling, and rising up into his throat and choking him.

She got up slowly, quietly. No sound came from her, and like some fateful figure in a preordained tragedy, in whom emotion and life had played out their parts, had burnt out their last fires, she turned to the grey-glooming pool.

One step she took—two—and Mr. Pope had her by the shoulder.

He was gasping now, but the face that looked at him hardly

showed any emotion. Slowly from his grip the figure sank down.

'Miss Storey!' said Mr. Pope, slipping down beside her. 'Miss Storey!' he cried, putting an arm around her and drawing her up against his heart. 'Miss Storey—my God!' gulped Mr. Pope.

'Ah, why?' she muttered. 'Why? I am so tired.'

Why had he interfered, eh? The question caught at his heart-strings, at the awakened humanity in him, so that he choked.

Why, indeed! By God, just in the nick of time! His heart began to whirl again, but now with a wild, mad exultation in it. Why, indeed, eh! In the very nick! Tears blurred his sight. The child began to cry.

'See here!' said Mr. Pope. 'I'll take the little fellow.'

There was no response, and conscious within himself of being both the law and the life, he suddenly fumbled at her breast.

Victory did not come at once, but when at last he had made it plain that he would not leave go of her now for all the entreaties on earth, nor yet though the heavens came down in very small bits, she suddenly crumpled up in his hands, her body shaken in a convulsion of frightful coughing.

He got her to her feet ultimately, made her grip at an arm of his, while head down he burrowed forward into the branch entanglements, holding the child with both hands against his chest; a masterful progress, wherein he felt himself not only commanding life but ordering destiny.

But that night destiny, in the person of the doctor, entered his little sitting-room and said quietly, levelly:

'She won't last very long.'

There was a silence in which Mr. Pope's mind groped blindly. Then—

'Won't—last—very long,' he repeated.

The doctor eyed him, and his expression softened. He shook his head. He mentioned certain complications, temperature 105, no reserve—impossible—utterly.

And Mr. Pope made a supreme effort at self-command.

'And the child?' he asked.

'All right,' said the doctor. Then after a little—'I'll get some things—be back in a few minutes—but——' He shrugged.

Mr. Pope accompanied him down the little garden to the gate.

'You—you'll spare no expense, doctor? I—I'll——' His voice broke.

VI.

Mr. Pope sat at his desk in the little sitting-room gazing down the garden where spring had blown into summer. Events had justified the doctor, and Mr. Pope in a brief space had played many parts. Summer was also blowing its starry flowers where tragedy lay asleep with its own secrets for evermore.

But what at that moment was most definitely impinging upon Mr. Pope's consciousness was no more than a phrase in a dead tongue. In a dead tongue? Verily the phrase pulsed with more life than any phrase of the only living tongue which Mr. Pope knew. And it spelt—*In loco parentis*.

With it he had satisfied (very easily, it is true) some one or two relatives of Miss Storey, with whom he had come perforce in contact, there being neither father nor mother. With it he had set the seal finally upon, not his emancipation from, but his thralldom to, life. Thralldom of birds and woods and the ancient earth, of dark and mysterious blood currents of our common humanity, of an abiding wonder at ever-changing, ever-changeless beauty, of gratitude, of sorrow, of joy, and finally, inscrutably, of the all-pervasive incense that is love.

In loco parentis. What a starting-place for dreams! The Psalmist certainly owed him ten more years. But, with care, why not twenty? Why not more?

How he would train the young idea! How the pliant limbs would shin up trees! What a naturalist he would make of him! And the expeditions together! Down the bright avenues of spring days, in the hushed summer woods, in the mellow autumn, to the long winter evenings for reading and preparation! Was that folly, sentimental folly? Nay, verily, so God help him, it would be but less than the reality! And then . . . 'death after life doth greatly please.'

His finger-tips clutched spasmodically at the ledger which for so many weeks had lain unopened; presently caught a cover and turned it over, revealing a front page on which had been inscribed the firm's name of Philip Pope. His eyes, with the haze of vision on them, came from the garden to the open page, regarded the name, the ever-bare, inadequate name. A moment, and the eyes were brimming with the light of an inspiration; and deep in the light gathered a slow, wise smile, as hand dipped pen-point in ink-pot and with exquisite care extended the title to—'Philip Pope & Son.'

SOME TROPICAL PETS.

INTEREST in animals and birds in captivity has, as far back as history relates, characterised people of all nations and of various degrees of civilisation. No doubt prior to the more or less complete domestication of the dog and the cat the ancestors of these present-day house-dwellers were kept under much the same conditions as are now applied to those *ferae naturae* that we keep in menageries and zoological gardens. The present-day tendency is to do away as far as possible with the hideous barred cages which afforded such cramped quarters for the unfortunate creatures confined in the old-time menageries. Contrast the comparative freedom of the animals allowed to roam on the Mappin terraces of the Zoological Society's gardens or the even greater space in Hagenbeck's place outside Hamburg with the old-time accommodation afforded the lions and tigers at the Tower or the elephants at the Royal Exchange. Even then the habits of no animal can be seen to better advantage than in its own proper habitat. The fauna of that immense area of forest, stream, and savannas which, reaching from the Orinoco to the Amazon, constitutes Guiana—Venezuelan, British, Dutch, French, and Brazilian—presents a rich and varied assortment of creatures, some of them of unusual and extraordinary type. And here conditions are favourable for studying many of these animals in such a way as not to deprive them unduly of their liberty.

It is astounding to what an extent the most unlikely creatures can be domesticated if they are caught young. The aboriginal Indians of the interior seem to possess a wonderful gift in this direction, and you will see around their dwellings very often quite a little menagerie of birds and beasts which have only to go a few yards to be swallowed up by the bush. But in them the *animus revertendi* has been apparently as completely established as in the case of the dog or cat, and they never seem to wander far afield. It was thanks to some of my Indian friends, who brought birds and animals to me in the capital of British Guiana from time to time, that I was enabled to form a little collection of pets. Fortunately I had a fairly large compound, and this being fenced in with galvanised iron afforded plenty of space. The fence was necessary to keep out strange dogs, cats, and bipeds too.

The first arrival was a baby peccary. He was very young and his tameness, if not shocking to see, was most fascinating. From his frequent remarks of 'Wauk ! wauk !' I named him Walker, to which cognomen he ever after responded with great politeness. The infant Walker grew at a most astounding rate, but he was never more engaging than in his extreme youth. One had only to call his name and the tap, tap of his little horny feet would be heard as he answered the summons. Walker showed considerable sagacity by making a firm friend of the cook, whom he would follow to market each morning, trotting after her like a little dog.

Of course the reader will know that the peccary (*Dicotyles torquatus*) is a kind of wild boar ; but he is not by any means a hoggish creature. His legs are slender and shapely like those of the deer, and although he has a sort of musk gland on his back, he only uses it when enraged. Under certain conditions, the peccary is one of the most dangerous animals in the world, and one that the jaguar and the puma fear. At certain times these animals travel in herds of thousands, and woe betide any creature, even man himself, that crosses their path ! The well-developed tusks of the peccary are as sharp as lancets, and their owner does not know what fear is. To return to Walker. I never knew him to be in the least scared of anything. Even when quite a piglet he would face any dog with his small snout to the front and an expression in his little piggy eyes which said, 'I dare you !' Walker as a youthful pig was most affectionate, excessively clean, and not at all greedy. Unfortunately, when he grew big and his formidable tusks were full-grown, people began to be afraid of him, and except towards myself he became a trifle surly and irritable, so I had to send him to the Botanic Gardens in Georgetown, where the late Mr. Jenman, the distinguished botanist, who was at that time the curator, had him placed in a paddock with some savanna deer. Walker got on well with the deer, but unfortunately he would not allow any human being to go into the paddock, so he was shipped off to a sugar plantation, where he distinguished himself by killing the manager's imported Berkshire boar, an animal twice his size and weight.

The latter part of Walker's career as a pet was sad ; but until he grew up he was a most fascinating little beast. I managed to get a companion for him in his early days in the shape of another wild boar of an allied but distinct species. This pig (*Dicotyles labiatus*) is called by the Indians the abouyeh. It does not congregate in great crowds like the peccaries but is generally found in

pairs. The abouyeh differs in colour from the grizzly rufous brown of the peccary in that it is of a slate colour and is without the collar of whitish bristles which characterises *D. torquatus*.

Another engaging little pet, and one whose arrival at maturity did not spoil his disposition, was a kinkajou (*Cercoleptes caudivolvulus*).

Kinky was allowed to go anywhere about the house, and, unlike the monkey under similar conditions, he never got into mischief. He was a pretty little fellow with a head something like that of a Teddy bear. The body was not much larger than that of a squirrel, and was clothed with fur of the most velvety softness. There was much of the plantigrade in his ambulatory apparatus; but his most surprising feature was his elegant and useful prehensile tail—his caudivolvular member in fact. Kinky had a most affectionate habit of clinging to one with his prehensile tail round one's neck. His eyes were large and brilliant, reminding one of the lemurs. Kinky was an ideal household pet; he never got in the way. As a rule he would hang by his tail from a picture frame, a curtain pole, or anything handy, or, in his case, taily. He never made noises, never broke anything.

The kinkajou, if he could stand the climate, would be a complete success as a pet in this country, and many a proud Pekingese would have his nose put out of joint, as nurses used to express themselves on occasions of an addition to the family.

Buffon in his remarks on the kinkajou says:

‘J’ai plusieurs fois pris la résolution, continue M. Simon Chauveau, de vous offrir cet animal vivant, pour le soumettre à vos observations; mais il venait dans ces instans me caresser si doucement et jouer autour de moi avec tant de gaieté que, séduit par ses gentillesse, je n’ai jamais eu le courage de m’en séparer.’

Julius, the ant-eater, was by no means as ingratiating a personality as Kinky. In the first place he seemed to possess a lower order of intelligence and not to offer a fertile field for the cultivation of the domestic virtues. I have no doubt that in the matter of the habits and customs of ants he was quite up to the mark. He also possessed a tongue of inordinate length. You wondered where he kept it, for when fully protruded—and this was a habit of Julius—it was as long as his whole body. Julius' investigations into the whereabouts of ants having led him to drive a sap under a promising bed of Eucharis lilies, he was confined to barracks, as it was

considered that his entomological researches would conflict with the claims of horticulture.

One is bound to confess that the ant-eater has little claim to outward beauty, though everyone who has lived in the tropics will commend his appetite for ants.

Julius had a long, inquisitive nose, slight, hooked, and tapering to a point, suitable for insertion into the entrance of an ant-hill; the long tongue, covered with viscid saliva, being shot into the winding passages and retracted covered with struggling ants caught on the fly-paper principle.

His pelt was coarse, and his tail long and bushy. One could not conscientiously pet Julius.

The armadillo was even less responsive to kindness than the ant-eater. He was naturally a thick-skinned person, and preferred to retire into the fastnesses of an impenetrable reserve. When he did unroll himself, the most conspicuous features he presented were his large, bat-like ears, which gave him a most ludicrous appearance. There is one thing to be said in favour of the giant armadillo, and that is, that the flesh of it roasted is most delicious.

The armadillo was quite a lively and intelligent animal compared to a sloth, of the two-toed variety (*Choloepus didactylus*), which was brought to me by a boviander. I was really almost ashamed to look at that sloth. The sight of him seemed to suggest all that was laziest in my own disposition. Professor William Beebe has found a very happy name for the sloth, which he calls 'the jungle sluggard.' This particular sloth met with a sad end. A learned gentleman of the biological laboratories at Oxford wrote to me and asked me to send him a sloth, as he was making researches into the nervous organisation of these animals. He did not want a live sloth, but the cadaver of one with formalin injected to preserve it. The difficulty was to kill the sloth in such a manner as to leave the specimen perfect. I thought that the most humane way to accomplish this was by means of chloroform. The late Dr. John Harrison and I administered an unbelievable quantity of chloroform and it had no more effect on the creature than so much water. Eventually we had to use an injection of prussic acid, and it took as much of the poison as would have killed ten men to finish him off.

The only member of the cat tribe I kept for any time was a young ocelot (*Felis pardalis*). The ocelot or ounce is the most beautifully marked of the tiger-cats. This one was quite tame, and I gave it to the Governor of Barbados. For some time it used to walk about

Government House like a tame cat; but as it grew older and its claws longer its attentions became somewhat painful, and eventually its banishment from the house was decreed, owing to the pard's well-meant but decidedly pointed attentions to the Bishop's daughter during a dinner-party.

The misdemeanours of the monkeys of different kinds I kept from time to time would fill a volume.

There was only one kind of monkey I never attempted to keep, and that was the so-called howling baboon (baboon he is not, but howling he is), *Mycetes seniculus*. No one who has ever heard the truly infernal din which this brute makes at sunset and dawn would ever dare to try keeping one in a city. The howler is enabled to make a prodigious noise owing to his possession of saccular diverticula in his larynx.

The spider-monkey (*Ateles ater* or *paniscus*) is quite tameable, and is not noisy like *Mycetes*. When standing upright he is quite a tall monkey but very slender. His coat is black, long, and silky, his face bare of hair and pink like a boiled prawn, his tail is long and prehensile, and his features and expression the most lugubrious in the world. In contrast to him, the marmoset is one of the smallest and certainly the prettiest and most engaging of all the monkey tribe. He is also very clean in his habits, and not destructive. His agility is remarkable, so much so that Shakespeare speaks of him as the 'nimble marmoset.'

I had a pair of these pretty creatures, Mr. and Mrs. Marmaduke, a happily mated couple. They achieved what monkeys seldom do in captivity, and acquired a couple of the funniest little baby marmosets conceivable. When born they were no bigger than mice. Unfortunately, tragedy in truly Euripidean measure followed. While Mrs. Marmy was engaged in her domestic duties, her mate, hearing, as one may suppose, the call of the wild, made an excursion to a house in the neighbourhood where there lived a lady marmoset. Retribution dogged him and he was captured and kept in durance vile until it was known to whom he belonged. He returned, alas, too late! The deserted Mrs. Marmy, having murdered her offspring in cold blood, did not survive them long enough to welcome the return of the prodigal.

Perhaps, on the whole, the wild birds which had been brought up from the egg, so to speak, by the Indians were the most entertaining. Chief of these were the trumpeters or agami (*Psophia crepitans*). Picture to yourself a miniature ostrich, standing perhaps

twenty inches high but of infinitely graceful figure; the body, for the main part, black, but with the head, long neck and breast covered by iridescent feathers of shades of peacock blue; long, slender legs and a most dignified gait.

The trumpeter has two distinct calls. When he is satisfied with himself and the world in general he emits a ventriloquistic 'Pom, pom' like the notes of a bassoon. His war-cry, however, reminds one of the old-fashioned watchman's wooden rattle. *Psophia* is an exceedingly brave bird, and if he is kept with poultry he will defend them to the death against marauders. To see a trumpeter dispose of a centipede is an entertainment in itself. Knowing that the centipede's nervous system is distributed in ganglia from section to section, he methodically pecks from one end to the other, and, so soon as his victim is limp and unable to bite, he jerks it into the air and absorbs it like a sword-swallower his sword, or an Italian his spaghetti.

I had about half a dozen of these trumpeters, and they were the most sociable kind of bird, always running to meet one and emitting a 'Pom, pom, pom' of welcome. Sometimes they would insist on walking down the road with one for quite a distance; but they always went home again.

A much larger bird than the trumpeter, but more clumsy in build, was the powis or curassow (*Craz alector*). About the size of a turkey, with shiny black plumage, and white under the tail, with a bright yellow beak, and with an erectile crest on the head, the powis is a quite handsome bird.

Those I had were very tame and much more demonstrative than the trumpeters. One little weakness they had, however. They could never resist the bare eggs of a child, and in this they seemed to share the idiosyncrasies of the turkey gobbler and the gander.

The late Dr. Norman Macleod in his reminiscences writes that when an urchin he was 'Sair hadden doun wi' the bubbly-jock.' So more than once it was necessary to rescue small people from the too pressing attentions of the powis.

A small flock of vicissi teal also lived on terms of complete amity with the trumpeters and powis. These beautiful little ducks have scarlet beaks and legs, and quite nice plumage. They had a small pond which they shared with Nicodemus the river turtle. Nicodemus was comparatively young and only some two feet long, but he was warranted, conditions being favourable, to go for a century and to grow to the diameter of a cart-wheel.

Nicodemus would approach the side of the pond when called and whistled to, and would protrude his long neck in order to have his head rubbed, a proceeding which he seemed to enjoy greatly.

A pair of land tortoises having shown a disposition to breed, a cartload of sand was dumped down in order to offer facilities for egg-laying. They quickly took advantage of this, and one morning I was surprised to see a number of little tortoises of about the size of a florin crawling out from the sand in which they had been hatched.

These tortoises (*Testudo tabulatus*) should attain the length of two feet at maturity. Whether they will do so or not one cannot say, as they vanished mysteriously. One day they were all present and correct; on the next they were simply not there. Perhaps they established themselves under the house and are still growing in that slow but sure way characteristic of their race. Human life is all too short to keep accurate toll on the growth of turtles or tortoises.

Still, in adopting various creatures, elbow-room was an important factor. The late Mr. Jenman, curator of the Botanic Gardens, was favourably situated with regard to some of the larger mammals. He had acquired a manatee which had its home in a small lake, where it browsed in a lethargic and cow-like manner; another addition to his menagerie was Don Juan, a tapir or maipouri. When this animal was quite young, he had the most admirable protective colouring, rivalling that of the forest deer; but when he grew towards maturity and put on weight, and he certainly did weigh quite a lot, his colour became much the same all over, a dark brown, shading to a slightly rufous brown. From what I have seen of the tapir in his wild state, I should credit him with a similar mentality to that of the rhinoceros. Having made up his mind to get to a certain point, he goes there seemingly blind to obstacles. His weight and his thick skin seem to be his only armament; but sometimes they avail against the attack of the jaguar or the puma.

T. S. HARGREAVES.

THE VINDICATION OF THE 'CANNY MARY.'

BY E. ARNOT ROBERTSON.

IN one respect I believe that Partner and I are unique among sailing enthusiasts : we have owned a boat for three years and have never claimed for her either exceptional speed or unusual seaworthiness. 'Sea-worthy' is the accepted alternative to 'fast' when describing one's own yacht : all private craft that can make no pretensions to speed are praised by their owners for their remarkable seaworthiness ; all, that is, except our boat.

It is not that we are immune from the general weakness of yacht owners ; the temptation has sometimes been very strong, when we were talking to people who were never likely to sail in her, but though with the least encouragement we could exaggerate with any yachting people, neither of us can actually invent stories about our boat without having some basis of truth to rest them on, and she simply will not bear out any would-be boastings.

Referred to grandly as 'our yacht' when we are among landmen, she figures formally as the *Canny Mary* on the bills which she runs up, at a pace that she shows nowhere else, but locally she is known as the *Creeping Misery*.

All boats have individual characters : they are lazy or eager ; fond of showing off, or shy, and only at their best out of the public eye. Some of them, drawing perhaps four feet six inches, can go aground where there is apparently six feet of water, and there are others of the same draught, which deserve all the tall stories their owners tell of them, because they glide serenely over a submerged mudbank on which there does not seem to be more than half a fathom of water. Owners who run their boats themselves learn to know their idiosyncrasies as no one else can. We and the *Canny Mary* have no secrets from each other ; ours is the mutual contempt of long familiarity. We know that we cannot afford a better boat, and resent her manifold imperfections ; she knows that she has been up for sale for a year, and is only with us through lack of offers, and so our association with her is one long battle for supremacy, in which the honours on each side are about even. Her most human trait is a sense of low comedy, and we are always gratifying it by being made to look ridiculous in her by some means or other.

She is one of the nastiest-tempered boats that were ever built, but on one memorable occasion she behaved for eight hours like a lady.

It was the climax to a long series of misdemeanours. We had run down the Blackwater one morning, before a fresh breeze, with all her canvas set, which was certainly thoughtless of us, for a topsail on the *Canny Mary* on a fine day has been known to change the weather over the whole of the East Coast. As a rule it brings either squalls or a dead calm, but this was a field-day for the *Canny Mary*, and we had both in succession. First the nice breeze freshened to a stiff wind, just as we were thinking of lunch. The meal was forgotten; water was soon coming over in solid sheets, making the boat sluggish, in addition to which she was heeling far over, under the canvas which Partner was struggling to get off her, and we knew uncomfortably that her topsides were sure to have opened considerably in the recent hot weather—she could never resist such an opportunity to do herself damage—and she must be letting water like a sieve: but we had no time to investigate. In spite of her deceptively good lines, she is hard to handle at all times; water-logged, she is dreadful.

The topsail sheet caught round one of the peak halyard blocks and jammed. I left the tiller and scrambled forward to help Partner, and we toiled feverishly with one eye on the lee shore for which the *Canny Mary*, left to herself, was making with unaccustomed nimbleness; one of her irritating peculiarities is that she will not heave-to and stand still. We hauled desperately together. Something cracked and gave up aloft, and the topsail came down on deck with a run, nearly braining me and snapping the bamboo spar. The *Canny Mary*, rejoicing in a sudden strong puff, lurched further over at that moment, and the whole sail almost slithered overboard. I grabbed it just as Partner reached the tiller and got the boat round on the other tack in the nick of time.

She was, I think, too surprised that I had foiled her attempt to lose her topsail, to realise that here was a splendid chance of 'missing stays,' as she often does, and running aground, for the shelving mud was right under her bows. Possibly she did not think it worth while to take the ground on a rising tide, which would refloat us in a few minutes. Early ebb, so that she secures a good ten hours' rest, is her favourite time for this performance.

By the time that we had succeeded in reefing the mainsail, and were hot and exhausted, the worst of the squalls were over. The

wind slowly died away, and when we were a long two miles from our berth in Mersea Quarters a dead calm set in, though the sea was still lumpy. We rocked sickeningly, and as there was no sign of a returning wind, we bailed her out laboriously by hand, because the pump struck work, though we poured pints of water down it, and then we began to tow her in the dinghy. For only a three-ton boat she is incredibly heavy in the water, and however careful the helmsman may be, she sheers about from side to side, making towing extremely hard work. Several biggish yachts, under their engine power, were coming up the estuary.

'If you get down into the cabin and pull the hatch over, while I toil pathetically at the oars,' I said to Partner, who was rowing, 'we shall get a tow!'

'And I should stifle before we were half there,' he said without enthusiasm. 'It would be like a stokehold in the cabin with the hatch on just now. *Come on, you brute!*' This was to the boat.

'Oh, you could pop up again as soon as the tow-rope was made fast. They could hardly cast us off as soon as they found that I was not a lone and helpless female.'

'Too much like getting things on false pretences,' said Partner. The *Canny Mary* has a curious knack of stirring up obstinacy in people, and though I pointed out that it was no use being over-scrupulous when dealing with a boat that has always lacked the most elementary sense of decency, he stuck to his point, and I suffered for his conscientiousness. Chivalry usually gives way to the exigencies of the *Canny Mary*, and we took it in turns to row. While I was in the dinghy a motor boat, some way astern, was rapidly overhauling us.

'Start up the Primus and let's have some more tea,' I said diplomatically. 'It'll be hours before we get in—at this rate.'

Our Primus, a 'Little Roarer,' imbued with the spirit of the boat, spits flaming oil for some minutes at the person who tries to light it, and, when it is going, makes it hard for anyone in the cabin to hear what is happening outside.

Partner obligingly disappeared from view, and the motor boat surged on towards us. The question was whether they would see me, hot, dishevelled, and apparently alone in my unhappy situation, before Partner, looking very brawny, reappeared. It would be one up to me if I spoilt the *Canny Mary's* designs for our discomfort by getting a tow home.

The motor boat altered its course. A man, beautifully

upholstered in white flannels and peaked yachting cap, was at the wheel, and a youth in the same get-up lounged against the rail. They were evidently what Charlie, the fisherman who looks after our boat, calls reverently 'real yachtin' folk,' as distinct, I suppose, from people like ourselves, who only sail. They came well within hailing distance, and while they were looking at the *Canny Mary* and me with interest, an enormous woman emerged from the cabin beside them.

'That,' she observed to the men, loudly enough for me to hear, 'is no job for a girl.' And in spite of it they swept by without offering a tow! The added rock from their wash brought Partner on deck.

'Those people came as close to us as that, and yet hadn't the compassion——! Oh, you miserable petrol-sailors!' he said vindictively to the disdainful stern of the motor boat.

Helped by a faint slant of air, when it was almost too late, we reached Mersea Quarters at last, and found that same boat, the *Ibis*, in our favourite berth. We anchored a hundred yards farther on, but though we were tired and hungry, the *Canny Mary* had not nearly done with us. It was the most astonishing day of accidents which we ever enjoyed in that resourceful boat. The mainsail would not come down. When the topsail sheet fouled the peak block it must have jammed it as we wrenched the sail down. Partner, in sea-boots, ran up the mast to see to the trouble, using the bamboo rings of the mainsail as a ladder, and his foot slipped and went through the top one. With the thick rubber boot on, he could not get it back, nor his foot out of the boot, and he had not got a knife on him. Looking like a human burgee flag, he was held, gibbering, at the top of the mast, while I searched frantically for his mislaid knife; and as a finishing touch to his discomfiture the *Ibis* people came on deck and took a photograph before he had cut himself free. This is the sort of thing to which the *Canny Mary* constantly subjects us.

We went below to a late supper.

'Curious smell,' I said after the meal, while we were lounging in the tiny cabin, breaking the great yachting law that everything must be washed up as soon as one has finished eating. It is strange that one meal for two people in a small boat can make the cabin look as if a hurricane had struck it.

'It's onions,' said Partner, smoking peacefully.

'No.'

'This tobacco of Charlie's, then. I can't find mine.'

'No; I think it's "fauna," not "flora." Surely we haven't left any stale meat about?'

'I threw away the remains of the stew this morning. The only other fresh meat we've had this week were those sausages, and we finished them, didn't we?'

'Oh, no!' I said in a small voice. 'I—I remember now, I lost two!'

'Good heavens! *Lost* two! What do you mean—lost two?'

'Well, they just went. Reported missing. Do you think—?'

He thought it very forcibly. Moving delicately among dirty plates, cups, and cooking utensils, and empty egg-shells, we sniffed around like hounds, and finally located the smell in the bilge. When we took up the floor boards there lay two big, dilapidated pork sausages, and close by were three little beef ones, but neither of us could remember when we had had beef sausages on board. As they seemed in every way undesirable sausages, we threw them overboard, but they left a decidedly charged atmosphere behind them. Partner may feel as I do about our loathsome boat, but he likes her clean.

The three *Ibises* chose that moment to come alongside in their dinghy, and asked if we could let them have a kettleful of fresh water for the next morning, as, being strangers in Mersea, they did not know where to get it. We could have told them the procedure, but refrained. First one rows a good quarter of a mile to the Hard, then carries the water-breaker half a mile up the road to a miserable trickle in the hedge, and there waits, if one is honest, till all the jugs and cans queued up in front of it are filled; then one substitutes one's own, and waits again, before carrying it with difficulty back to the Hard, and so to the boat. The whole process takes well over an hour, and consequently fresh water is never used except for drinking. The *Ibises* produced a kettle of a rotundity on a scale with their own, and the freemasonry of yachting forced us to supply them with a good grace. They asked to look over 'your jolly little boat,' which is another request that can never be refused.

'How—er—charming,' said Mrs. *Ibis* insincerely, stooping in the cabin, among a welter of floor-boards and greasy, scattered crockery. Rarely have I felt so ashamed of the boat. 'Didn't we pass you this evening near East Mersea?' she said. 'It struck me afterwards that we might have given you a tow, you know.'

I gasped, unable to think of a suitable reply.

On deck Mr. *Ibis* and the son were complimenting Partner on the *Canny Mary's* racy lines. That is the sickening thing about her. Built obviously for speed—certainly not for seaworthiness, though she looks quite sound—she must have had something 'crank' in her construction. Some small, unrectifiable error somehow crept into her design, and now makes her belie her excellent appearance. Scrape, plane, and alter her as we like, she still crawls through the water, and will not go to windward.

'Pretty fast, eh?' suggested Mr. *Ibis*.

'Fast? The *Canny Mary*?' said Partner bitterly. Father and son looked at each other. They seemed surprised at her unusual name, which is not painted on her. Partner disillusioned them about her speed.

'Ah, but a good sea-boat I expect?'

Partner put him right about that, too. She is thoroughly 'nail-sick,' and the only reason why her bottom boards do not drop out is that she knows we should probably escape in the dinghy and get good insurance money if they did.

I sighed, as the visitors left, at seeing half the contents of our water-breaker departing in their colossal kettle. Still, we could hardly expect them to go without an early cup of tea on our account.

'So kind of you to let us have this, my dear. Doesn't one's hair get in a dreadful state from the salt in the spray?' said Mrs. *Ibis*—inconsequently, I thought—as she settled herself in their dinghy.

I agreed. My own was matted and sticky, and would have to stay in that condition until we left the boat.

'I felt I really must wash mine, but we had stupidly run out of fresh water,' she said. 'I am so thankful you can spare this. You're quite sure——?'

This was more than human nature should be called upon to bear. Feeling that we could not face anything else, Partner and I turned in.

I woke in the night thinking that I had heard something, but not knowing what. I was almost off to sleep again when the sound was repeated, and so I did not recognise it. After that I stayed awake, and the third time it came I was almost sure that the *Canny Mary* was up to one of her favourite tricks once more. The night wind had sprung up, blowing against the tide, and in these

conditions, swinging about on her anchor, the boat has that heart-breaking habit of winding the chain round the stock of her anchor and lifting it. It had got on my nerves so much that I had given a false alarm of dragging once before, and on this occasion I resolved to make sure before I called Partner. This time there could be no doubt of it. I could feel, rather than hear, the slow, gentle grating as she shifted her anchor over the bottom, and before I could wake Partner came a jolt and a grinding crash; terrific it sounded in the pitch blackness of the cabin, in which the sounds echoed and were magnified.

We tore on deck to find, of course, that we had drifted on to the nearest yacht, the *Ibis*. A shrill clamour rose from that boat, and dim figures appeared, silhouetted in strange, flapping garments against the stars, but we, stumbling and fumbling in the chaotic darkness, could pay little attention to them while the two boats ground against each other's sides, with an ominous accompaniment of jarring and cracking.

Partner was mightily fending us off, shouting to me to do various things simultaneously at different ends of the boat, while I, carrying out one order at a time, was feebly trying to get the jib up. The wind was keen, but we had enough to do, if not to wear, to keep us warm while we struggled, clad in night-kit only, to part the locked boats, for what seemed at least half an hour, but was probably five minutes.

At length we drifted astern and anchored in safety, still within earshot of the motor boat people, who were exceedingly unpleasant about the whole business. They said angrily, before investigating, that we had done five pounds' worth of damage, and knowing the *Canny Mary's* capabilities in that direction, I expect their guess was about right. Five pounds, at any rate, was the sum we had to pay later. The voice of some creatures, notably the nightingale, is rendered lovelier by the glamour of night. The *Ibises* were emphatically not that kind of bird!

There was no further disturbance that night, nor the next morning, when we carefully avoided glancing towards the neighbouring boat while we were on deck, and studied the damage as well as we could through the cabin port-hole. It was undoubtedly extensive. The *Canny Mary* is a glutton for other people's paint, though she seems to care very little about her own. Breakfast passed off without a hitch, and not a spoon went overboard while we were washing up. We began to feel almost uneasy, waiting

for the daily accident. There may be more, but there is always one a day in this boat, and we are relieved when it has happened.

We got under weigh in fine style, with two reefs down, for the weather was still squally. 'This will mean another dead calm, I suppose,' said Partner pessimistically, but it did not. The breeze steadied and freshened into a good, hard sailing wind, and though the *Canny Mary* was listing right over before it, her dry seams must have taken up and swelled in the soaking they had had the previous day, for there was phenomenally little water in the bilge when we had lunch, at which no untoward incident occurred.

Partner and I solemnly shook hands after the meal. 'If this goes on, something cataclysmic and unprecedented is bound to happen very soon!' he said. But the wind continued fair, though it was rather too strong for comfort, and we had a glorious and uneventful afternoon, beating down the estuary towards the sea.

After tea it gradually came on to blow so hard that we decided to make for home, as the tide was on the turn. The last run would be a wonderful finish to a perfect day, for the young flood with this wind behind it would sweep even the *Canny Mary* back to the Quarters at a record pace. Just before we started the nasty job of wearing her round in a heavy wind I said: 'Is that a fishing smack out there to wind'ard, getting a pretty bad time?'

It was hard to see her clearly, for we were bobbing about like a cork, with spray flying over our bows continually.

'No,' said Partner at length; 'it's a motor boat of sorts, run aground on St. Peter's Point. Poor wretches!'

I think a light of wonder and hope gleamed in both our faces. We said nothing for a moment until we were quite sure, and then, 'It's the *Ibis*!'

Now the shoal-water of the low-lying Essex coast is like no other yachting ground in these islands. Full of under-water mud-banks or 'horses,' that come dry or are barely covered at low tide, it abounds in traps for the unwary. To many people there is something depressing in the desolation of the flat expanse of the great salt marshes, fringed, when the tide recedes, with wide, smooth stretches of mud; but these wind-swept, inlet-riven shores have a weird, wild fascination of their own, which never lets go of those whom it has conquered. St. Peter's Point, where the *Ibises* had come to grief, like many better yachtsmen before them, was on the mainland, but between them and the firm ground stretched nearly half a mile of gleaming, treacherous soft mud, on which

they were nicely marooned, for they had evidently gone aground some time before low tide, since they were still high and dry, surrounded on all sides by mud, over which the returning tide was now creeping up towards them.

For us there was now no question of turning back. A mixture of humanity at its noblest and at its basest drove us on to investigate this matter. Admittedly novices at the game, having left their crew behind at Burnham, these people were aground on a lee shore in a heavy rising wind with no one else to help them, for there was not another sail in sight. Moreover, they had been most discourteous to us about the collision. The desire to assist and to crow was about equal in us, but we repressed the latter.

'*Canny Mary* will never reach up to them against this wind and tide,' said Partner. 'It's beginning to run pretty fast now.'

'In the ordinary way she wouldn't,' I said, 'but I believe she will to-day.'

She answered gallantly, surprising us both. It was a gruelling task, taking nearly an hour, but not once did she hesitate to come about, as she generally does, requiring careful nursing to get her round in a wind. Instead, she spun about like a top, or like a really self-respecting yacht.

The *Ibises* saw us coming and signalled violently for relief. They were in a bad position, with their boat lying almost on her side in the mud, in such a way that the rising tide, with the wind in that quarter, would drive them farther and farther on to the shore.

'Idiots!' said Partner. 'They haven't even got a kedge-anchor out, and the water is almost up to them!'

We shouted to them, while we stood off-and-on to the shore, and tried to make them understand by pantomime, but they shouted something back to us which we could not hear against the wind.

'Well, there's nothing for it but to anchor here, go over to them in the dinghy, as far as the edge of the water, and then wade through the mud the rest of the way. It's only about fifteen yards, and it looks pretty firm just there,' said Partner. 'Old *Ibis* says he knows all about engines, but he evidently knows nothing about boats. You'd better not come. It'll be a dirty job.'

'Do you think I'd miss this for anything on earth?' I said, tugging on rubber thigh-boots.

We were filthy with mud by the time we climbed on board, carrying our spare kedge-anchor and chain. It appeared that they had no kedge-anchor at all: they had been in this uncomfortable

position for two and a half hours, and Mrs. *Ibis* was in a terrible state of agitation.

'We'll get out two anchors to wind'ard at once,' said Partner, dropping back into the mud, which rose over his ankles. 'I shall want someone to help me.'

Mrs. *Ibis* looked at her men-folk's immaculate white kit, and then at me in my oldest, dirtiest clothes, which were already well smeared with black ooze.

'We have to go up to Town to-night, and these are the only clothes that my husband and son have with them. I wonder, as you have on those boots, which I'm afraid they couldn't get into, if—er——?'

I looked her grimly in the eye. '*This*,' I said, though I had done it often before, '*is no job for a girl!*'

Young *Ibis*, without protest, went over the side in his lovely white trousers, and floundered heavily in that muddiest of all muds, the Blackwater variety. It has the tenacity of glue, the indelible qualities of marking ink, the consistency of soft jelly, and is also supposed to have curative properties. I doubt that the *Ibis* son thought much of its healthiness as he ploughed through it, losing his balance once, so that it got on to his coat and shirt too. Partner, accustomed to dealing with it, had little difficulty, but neither he nor I thought it necessary to tell the youth that if one slides one's heel sideways at each step, the air gets in and the mud does not grip in the same way. One of the young man's pretty white buckskin shoes was sucked off.

The *Ibis* crew were coming round by train from Burnham the next day, and would take the boat home. She was safe for the night when we left her, taking her owners with us as soon as the water rose sufficiently for us to get our dinghy alongside.

The *Canny Mary*, grossly overloaded, fairly romped home; she was a paragon among boats that day.

'Not such a bad little craft as you made out,' observed Mr. *Ibis*.

'It's the first time in her life that she's behaved like this,' Partner told him.

'And I expect it will be the last,' I said (and I have since proved to be right). 'As a rule, the only nice thing that one can say of her is that, unlike good yachts, she never lets her crew suffer from lack of exercise. They get all they want, and a bit over.'

We landed this bedraggled family, who were all soaked through with spray before we reached Mersea, and they hurried away shamefacedly. To us, a little later, came our old friend Charlie.

'I was a-lookin' for you everywhere last night, but you didn't come in till so late. There was a party of yachtin' folk come over yesterday afternoon to see that little ow'd *Creep—Canny Mary* of yours. They read the advertisement and they wanted a bit of a sailing boat for their son, what was with them. I've not seen them to-day; they've gone, maybe. Did you see them?' He described the *Ibises* to us.

'Oh, yes, they've gone!' said Partner, and we gazed at each other, stunned.

'They admired her, and we told them—*think* what we told them!' I said, my voice nearly cracking with emotion. 'Charlie, did they mention what they thought of offering for her if they liked her?'

'Well, they did ask me if I thought as how the owners would want more'n eighty pound for her, and I tell them I couldn't rightly say, she being a powerful fine little boat; and then I look hard-like at Ginger George, and he says the same too.'

In our optimistic moments we had hoped to get sixty.

'Never mind,' said the ever honest Partner, 'we couldn't have accepted eighty pounds, you know. It's twice what she's worth. And at the same time,' he added bravely, 'it's not half what she's worth to us in entertainment. After her, an ordinary, well-found boat would be very monotonous.'

We are both trying hard to believe this.

LOCH A' MHACHAIR OF UIST.

BY SETON GORDON.

ALONG the western sea-board of South Uist many lochs lie. To some of them the spring tides penetrate, winding sinuously through hollows in the green machair, so that the waters of these lochs for days on end may be brackish, and the bladder wrack may float in long yellow lines upon the peat-stained surface. But most of the lochs are out of reach of the long pulsating fingers of the Atlantic. Many of them, it is true, are only a few feet above sea-level at flood tide, and at some future age will be one with the boundless ocean that is imperceptibly encroaching upon the land, so that in ancient villages the fronds of the sea-tangles wave, and over old burying places great lythe and congers swim, and there is the green twilight of ocean depths. Loch a' Mhachair is the Loch of the Machair, or level grazing land that extends from one end of Uist to the other along the western margin of the isle. In summer this machair is a fairyland of flowers, but in winter and spring bitter winds sweep across it, and there is no tree, no bush or shrub, to give shelter.

There is an old Gaelic saying, 'Fast goes the man-of the thriftless wife along the machair of Uist'—for it is inferred that the clothes of that man are in bad repair, and thus the keen wind puts swiftness upon him, for it blows on him through his threadbare clothes. During most of the year the winds breathe uninterruptedly upon the waters of Loch a' Mhachair; an army of waves or wavelets, according to the force of the wind, hurry across its shallow waters and break in a smother of foam on its leeward shore.

From the latter days of October until April the clan of the wild swans is rarely absent from the loch. On days of tempest, and when driving rains from the south-west cast their grey lances slant-wise into the wind-torn waters, the swans majestically ride out the storm. When frost is likely to bind the waters of the loch the swans swim backwards and forwards day and night without pause in their efforts to keep open a lane of water. They are said even to rise upon the water and beat the young ice with their wings. And all the while the restless white company call one to another so that the quiet air is filled with a murmur of many musical, far-carrying voices. A beautiful Gaelic 'rune' was composed by a woman of the Isles on a wild swan which she found

injured and carried home. As the condition of the swan improved so did the condition of her sick child, and the woman, convinced that the swan was mysteriously helping her, composed many charming verses on the feathered guest. In the Outer Isles it was of good omen to hear the wild swans in the morning before one's fast had been broken, especially of a Tuesday morning. It was also believed that to see seven, or a multiple of seven, swans on the wing ensured peace and prosperity for seven, or a multiple of seven, years.

In the Isles linger many legends concerning the wild swans. They are sometimes said to be Norse princesses imprisoned beneath a spell. Another tradition relates that they are ill-used religious ladies under enchantment who have been driven from their homes and compelled ever to wander and to dwell where most kindly treated and where least molested.

Thus it is said to be most unlucky to kill a wild swan.

There is a Gaelic rhyme :

' Chuala mi guth binn nan eala
Ann an dealachadh nan trath
Glugalaich air sgiathaibh siubhalach,
Cur nan cura dhiubh gu h—ard."

' I heard the sweet voice of the swans
At the parting of night and day,
Gurgling on the wings of travelling,
Pouring forth their strength on high.'¹

How inspiring it is to see the wild swans in a white compact company beating into the very teeth of the storm that rushes across the machair of Uist ! With remarkable power of flight they seem to slide, rather than fly, through the air ; upon them the gale has little effect, although its strength is so great that even the gulls are forced to take shelter. On these days of winter storm the flying 'scud' sweeps low across Loch a' Mhachair, and wraps closely the corries of Hecla, so that the cone of this grim hill is a country of swift-driven vapours that sweep on impetuous course from the vast spaces of the Atlantic to the grim pinnacles and rocky aerial spires of the Black Cuillin of Skye.

Beside the sleepless Atlantic there is life, even in the depths of winter, and it is one of the charms of the Misty Isles that bird life is almost as plentiful at mid-winter as during the long serene days of June.

¹ Taken from "Carmina Gadelica" by the late Alexander Carmichael, LL.D.

Beside Loch a' Mhachair is a winter haunt of the barnacle goose, which has its summer home so far into the Arctic regions that curious myths persist concerning its reproduction.

In the Isles it is still believed by some of the old people that the barnacle goose has its birth from a barnacle, floating perhaps hundreds of miles from land. Another belief is that the gosling falls from a barnacle that grows on a certain tree found only on the Orkney Isles, on one particular shore of that island group. It is in keeping with their mysterious origin that the barnacle geese should arrive mysteriously at their winter haunts beside Loch a' Mhachair. One morning of late October a great company of geese may be seen where the evening before had been a waste of brown grasses, salt-encrusted and lonely. The geese stand there, a silent and alert company, facing the wind. After a time they commence to feed on the grass which forms their winter food, but they are full of suspicions; for they are in a strange land and know not where an enemy may lurk.

Perhaps twenty-four hours earlier that silent assembly had stood on the coast of Greenland, or on the shores of hill-set Spitzbergen. The winter night was approaching, and now for only a few minutes at noontide could the pale sun top those icy spires which rise so steeply from the Polar sea that the winter's snow can find no lodgment upon them. Near the shore the opaque emerald waters were already imprisoned beneath the ice.

As the barnacle geese stood there the impulse of southern migration seized them. Into the frosty twilight they rose with musical clamour, swung round several times, circling higher and ever higher, then gathered themselves together into their accustomed formation and headed south towards the distant Hebrides, that lay, remote and invisible, fifteen hundred miles below the southern horizon. It has been scientifically established that wild geese on migration travel at almost incredible speed, for in a goose that was shot in Britain was found a shellfish, still undigested, which is known only in Polar seas.

The wild geese are more restless than their cousins the wild swans, and although they pass many winter days beside Loch a' Mhachair, they fly often along the western shores of Uist, and cross to the grassy uninhabited isles of the Sound of Barra. Other bird visitors have their home beside Loch a' Mhachair of Uist. Great flocks of golden plover swerve and wheel in swift flight above its low grassy shores, and grey lag geese often feed here. And upon

the waters of the loch are to be seen a great company of wild duck of many different species. There is the old tradition in the Isles that when Christ in His wanderings was seeking to escape from His enemies He came to a wee croft beside the Atlantic. He spoke to the good man of the house of His plight, and the crofter covered Him over with his corn so that He lay concealed. There were ducks on the croft, and when they saw the sheaves temptingly spread upon the ground they hurried up and fed eagerly upon the grain, but did not attempt to displace the shelter. But it was otherwise with the hens of that croft. When they in their turn found the corn and commenced to feed they scratched and scraped until the Christ lay exposed. And as a punishment for this disservice the hens were no longer permitted to love the rain (as they had done previously) nor the water, and from then onwards were in terror at the approach of a thunderstorm. But the ducks were still happy on the water, and during times of rain, and with joy heard the oncoming thunder. And it is said to this day that when the duck hears the thunder she dances to her own Port a' Bial (Mouth Music).

In February the sun strengthens beside Loch a' Mhachair. In sheltered nooks the flower of Saint Bride of the Kindly Shores—the lowly dandelion—opens its orange-tinted florets. High above the loch float the ravens that, more than any other bird, feel the approach of spring. The raven was the sacred bird of the Norsemen of old, and at least one highland clan—the MacDougalls—have the raven to-day as their emblem.

At the Battle of Clontarff in 1014, the Raven Banner of Battle was used by Jarl Sigurd in his battle with the Irish. There was a prophecy that the banner would always bring victory to its OWNER but death to its BEARER, and during this battle every man who in turn raised the banner fell mortally injured. Seeing this, Sigurd Jarl himself snatched up the banner, saying as he did so, 'Tis fitting the beggar himself should bear his bag.' Immediately he fell, and with his fall ended the Norse power in Ireland.

It is in March that the first of its winter visitors leave Loch a' Mhachair. Then the wild swans spread their strong snowy wings and, rising into the clear air, set their course northward towards their summer homes in the Arctic. Until April, or even May, the wild geese linger, for their nesting grounds lie still farther north and the snow in those high latitudes is slow to melt. With May arrive summer bird visitors beside Loch a' Mhachair. One sees many dunlin—quaint little birds, in size rather less than a snipe—

and the clan of the terns or sea swallows, fresh from the sunlight of tropical seas.

And now the grasses become slowly green, and on quiet sunny days heavy trout break the placid surface of the loch and suck down the drifting flies.

On a grassy isle of Loch a' Mhachair a great colony of black-headed gulls nest, and often drift in a restless white cloud above the sunny waters; from the Atlantic shore close by terns sail in to join them with delicate fairy-like flight.

All through the long sunny days of June larks mount high into the blue fields of heaven, pouring forth a flood of song—for is not the lark Fosag Mhuire, Mary's own especial linnet?

In those wonderful days when the skies are blue, the air still, and the Atlantic indigo in tone, the machair is green no longer: it is a dreamland of flowers. In the gentle breeze that drifts fitfully in from the ocean the crimson orchis sways, and great fields of bird's-foot trefoil seem to throw back the sun-flood on innumerable golden blossoms. Besides the blue waters of the loch the white 'cannach' or cotton grass bows gracefully when the sea breeze blows, and here and there a family of harebells show mystic blue flower-heads amongst the grasses.

In drowsy July days, when the air is heavy with scent and when the Atlantic slumbers and the ocean swell that passes over it seems but the rhythmic pulsations of a deep sleeper, the clan of the ragwort raise their stems above the surrounding herbage and hold to the sun their large golden flower-heads. During nights of storm, so it is said, beings of the spirit world hide themselves behind the stalks of the ragwort, and find shelter enough here. The ragwort, the eyebright, and the field gentian are among the last of the flowers of the machair of Uist to blossom, and ere they have faded the fierce equinoctial gales sweep in from the west and spread sad destruction over that land of flowers.

WHERE LOAFERS ARE TURNED INTO WORKERS.

BY EDITH SELLERS.

TWO FOREIGN PENAL WORKHOUSES.

ALMOST everywhere there are loafers now, men and women whose aim in life is to live on the labour of others, instead of earning their own daily bread. In some countries they are, however, but few, and they are becoming fewer and fewer from year to year; whereas in England they are many, and they are increasing and multiplying rapidly—more rapidly than in any other country. And that not because we as a nation are more prone to loaf than other nations; but because loafing is made so much more easy here than elsewhere. Here the work-shirking habit is fostered, whereas elsewhere infinite trouble is taken not only to eradicate it, when a habit it is, but to prevent its ever becoming a habit.

The old Biblical law, 'He who will not work shall not eat,' is still in force in some countries, and loafers are left to starve. In others, work shirking is held to be a crime against the community, and as such is punished; while in others again it is regarded as something akin to a disease, a disease which, as it is 'catching,' must, for the community's sake as well as the patient's, be cured, and radically, no matter how painful the curing process may be. In England, however, it is quite otherwise. Here loafers are encouraged to go on loafing; for, far from being left to starve, they are provided with good beds and square meals, even when the dole must be denied them. They may betake themselves to the workhouse when they will; and, unless they be the veriest novices in their calling, from the workhouse to the infirmary is for them but one step. And there they are much too comfortable to have any great wish to hurry away, as the ratepayers know to their sorrow.

Now to encourage men to loaf is surely contrary to common sense—the very quality on which we used to pride ourselves. For their loafing is bad all round, bad for the ratepayers, whom it impoverishes and whose temper it ruffles; still worse for the genuine work-seekers, on whom it brings discredit, and with it hardship; and worst of all for the loafers themselves, whom it demoralises and thus robs of their chance of ever becoming decent members of

society. The greatest kindness that can be done to them is to force them to give up loafing and set to work to earn their own living. And for the great majority of them that could be done, if enough trouble were taken. In Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, and Denmark it has, indeed, already been done. Outside a reformatory I rarely met a loafer in the Berne Canton, or, barring Vienna, in Lower Austria, or Belgium, or in Denmark; although in pre-war days I sought long and diligently. Yet again and again, while on my quest, I came across both men and women who, so far as I could judge, would have been loafers had not measures been taken to prevent them. For, unless their faces belied them sorely, they were of the very stuff of which loafers are made. They were working, but only because they could not loaf—loafing had been made practically impossible for them. And what has been done there could be done here, done too, as Berne has proved, without the rates being raised by one penny. Not only could it be done, but it ought to be done, if only for the sake of the young, for the sake of securing boys and girls against drifting into work shirking.

The people of Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, and Denmark differ from one another fundamentally; none the less they each in turn tackled the loafer problem for precisely the same reason, *i.e.* because work shirking was spreading among them; and, although seeking under diverse conditions, they each found the same solution for the problem. They, or rather those in authority over them, arrived at the conclusion that the only way to put a stop to work shirking was to help the shirkers to acquire the habit of working. They were wise enough to know that that could not be done in a day, nor yet in a month, nor even perhaps in a year; and that it would therefore be useless to send loafers to prison. What such folk require is a reformatory, they decided, a place where they can not only be forced to work, but taught how to work skilfully, and be made to realise that in working hard and well lies their best chance of either finding peace and comfort there, or of becoming free men again and seeing the outside world.

Some forty years ago such reformatories—penal workhouses was the name given to them—were organised in Lower Austria and Denmark; and before very long they were in full working order not only there but also in Switzerland and Belgium. In Denmark every province is now required by law to have either a penal workhouse of its own, or a share in one belonging to a neighbouring province. And the result is, loafing as a profession is now practically

extinct throughout the land ; and a stop has been put to the visits of undesirable aliens. For there they too are sent to a penal work-house if, having once been deported, they venture to return.

As the time is at hand when our loafer problem will have to be tackled, those foreign reformatories have for us, as a nation, somewhat special interest just now. Those in Denmark are among the very best, and there is undoubtedly much to be learnt from them. There is, however, for us, I am inclined to think, still more to be learnt from the reformatory at Korneuburg, in Lower Austria, and that at Witzwil, in Switzerland. For they are essentially 'bettering' institutions, and they are both run on business lines. At Korneuburg, when I was there, the inmates were earning 80 per cent. of what they cost ; while at Witzwil they were earning not only every penny that they cost, but many pennies more.

The Austrians are a long-suffering race ; never would they have taken up arms even against loafers had they not been forced. Before Korneuburg was built, however, loafers were as plentiful as blackberries in Lower Austria ; and sturdy beggars went about the countryside extorting gifts by threats, when they failed to obtain them by cajolery. The state of things was so bad, indeed, that the Government had no alternative but to start an anti-loafer campaign. They began by passing a Vagrancy Act under which able-bodied persons found without visible means of support, begging, or allowing their children to beg, could be sent to prison for three months. Then they appealed to the benevolent to cease giving alms, and called upon the clergy to denounce indiscriminate alms-giving as a sin. It was all in vain : the charitable would be charitable, let even the Church say what it would ; and beggars would go on begging ; for, as there was soon ample proof, they would rather spend three months in prison than work for twelve months outside. As a last resource Korneuburg was built, and within a year the convictions under the Vagrancy Act decreased by 60 per cent.

Korneuburg was, when opened, declared officially to be an institution where 'men were to be kept at work, made to understand the value of work, and have a love of work aroused in them' ; where, in fact, loafers were to be transformed into workers. Any able-bodied vagrant found begging in Lower Austria may be sent there ; and he must be sent there if it can be proved that he has refused work that the authorities regard as suitable for him, and that was offered to him under what they consider fair conditions. And once there, there he must remain for three years, unless he can

meanwhile convince the authorities that he has seen the error of his ways, and may be trusted to earn his living outside.

No one may be sent to Korneuburg who can prove that he has been honestly trying to find work, and has failed through no fault of his own. It is, in fact, only loafers who may lawfully be sent there; and infinite care is taken to guard against genuine work-seekers being sent there by mistake. All trials under the Vagrancy Act are held in open court; and, against the verdict given there, there is the right of appeal. Then, once a fortnight, a representative of the Governor of Lower Austria visits the institution and holds an inquiry, at which any inmate who thinks he is being detained wrongfully, or who has any other grievance against the officials, has the right—and he avails himself of it freely—to state his case and claim redress. It is the Governor's representative who decides, in consultation with the Director, the Chaplain, and the Doctor, when each inmate leaves, subject to the condition that he must leave at the end of three years, if not before. On an average only some 15 per cent. of those sent there remain the full three years.

The inmates are divided into three classes, and each class is kept entirely apart from the other two. When a man arrives he is put into the third class; and there can be no question of his leaving until he has worked his way into the first class. How long that takes depends entirely on himself. If he works hard and behaves himself well, he is soon put into the second class; and if he continues in well-doing, in a few months' time he may be in the first. In the third class rigid military discipline is maintained and no indulgences of any kind are allowed. In the second class the treatment is more lenient, and those who are there have certain privileges; while those in the first class are not only dealt with kindly and considerately, but are allowed a fair amount of liberty. No matter in what class a man may be, however, he must work hard; and so long as he does, and his conduct is good, he is well fed, clothed, and housed. Every day an allotted task is so far as possible given to him, one fixed by the doctor as proportionate to his strength. That he is required to do, and he has every inducement to do it well; for the better he does it, the more comfortable he is while there and the sooner he is free to leave. If he does more than his task, he is paid for his extra work; and, although he must keep, until he leaves, one-half of what he earns, he may spend the other half on tobacco or what he likes. Should he, however, fail to do his task, things are soon made unpleasant for him; for at

Korneuburg no mercy is shown to work shirkers. A man who, after due warning, persists in shirking, soon finds himself in solitary confinement, on scant fare, too, and with only a plank bed to lie on. Curiously enough, considering the sort of men they are, very few of the inmates ever try to play the loafer after the first few days. Only about one-third of them are ever punished for loafing; and of those who are, a good half are punished only once.

The third-class men are closely imprisoned and work indoors, at their own calling, so far as possible. There are separate workshops for shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, blacksmiths, and basket-makers, as well as a huge laundry, where the washing for all the public institutions in Lower Austria is done. Of the second-class men, some are employed in the reformatory gasworks; others on the farm attached to the reformatory, or in the garden; others, again, do the housework: they cook, clean, etc., for there is not a woman in the place. The first-class men who are specially fitted for the work are employed as minor officials. Each one of them has a room or workshop for which he is responsible. If it is a room, he must see that it is kept clean, and that they who sleep there demean themselves in an orderly fashion. If it is a shop, he must act as labour-master in the absence of the official master: he must see that the men work diligently, and he must help them, if help they need, in their work. Some of the first-class men are hired out in gangs to employers in the district. It is only those who are quite trustworthy who are allowed to join the gangs, and no one need join unless such be his wish. Every gang is accompanied by an official who watches over both them and their employers, sees that the men are properly treated, well fed, and that their employers do not overwork them. That arrangement seems to work well at Korneuburg; but I doubt its working well anywhere else; for it is fraught with danger for employers and employees alike.

Korneuburg is a huge place, and as grim outside as it is huge. It stands in a somewhat desolate region, and is more like a fortress than anything else. For it is surrounded by a high wall; its windows are securely barred, and soldiers are stationed before its doors. Inside there was, however, nothing grim about it when I paid it a visit. On the contrary, what struck me most on entering was the cheerful air of bustle that prevailed. Everyone seemed to have just as much to do as he could do, and to be doing it with all his might. The whole place was, in fact, much more like a factory worked on profit-sharing lines than an institution. As I

went from room to room I was also struck by the perfect cleanliness that prevailed—the dormitories were as spotless as a lady's boudoir. It was mid-winter and every room was not only well warmed but well aired. For great importance is attached to cleanliness and fresh air from the moral point of view, as well as the hygienic, the Director informed me; and I certainly never saw a cleaner set of working men than those ex-loafers.

The Director has full control of the working of the reformatory and of all who are there. He is, however, personally responsible to the Governor of Lower Austria, and through him to the Landtag, for all that is done there as well as for all that he himself does. He is free to punish wrongdoers as he will; but every punishment he inflicts must be entered in the official record book, which is laid before the Governor's representative at every inquiry; and he must explain to him its whys and wherefores. Then he is the adviser and helper of the inmates as well as their ruler. It is his business to watch over them, to encourage them to become decent men; his business, too, to stand, as it were, between them and his own officials, to be always on the watch to guard against oppression, or even stepping on toes, while enforcing strict discipline.

It was the custom, when I was at Korneuburg, for the Director to hold a sort of informal Court of Justice every morning. He sat in his office, the record book before him, his clerk by his side; and every inmate who, during the previous twenty-four hours, had done what he ought not to have done or left undone what he ought to have done, was brought before him, providing the offence was not serious. Inmates guilty of crime are tried in the public law courts. An official accompanied each offender and stated the case against him. The day I was in Court, one man was accused of stealing a comrade's tobacco; another, of upsetting through sheer perversity a comrade's can of coffee; a third, of having obtained surreptitiously a dangerous-looking knife. Some had had recourse to fists as a means of righting wrongs, while two were suspected of malingering. Most of the men defended themselves with considerable skill and quite extraordinary boldness. Evidently they knew that what they said in Court was privileged; and that no official would venture to bring it up against them outside. For some of them attacked their accusers in unmeasured terms, as the veriest Ananiases, while depicting themselves as more deserving of canonisation than of punishment.

They all seemed to have implicit faith in the Director, to look

on him as a friend who, although prone to expect too much of them, could be trusted to deal with them fairly. And he certainly strove hard to do so that morning. He sifted the evidence against them carefully, and he practically acted as defender in the case of a man who made no effort to defend himself. For the minor officials, however, especially the labour masters, the prisoners, it was easy to see, had no liking at all. Life at Korneuburg would be much better worth living, they evidently thought, if not a single labour master was there.

'Some of the most precious scoundrels in Europe are at Korneuburg,' an expert in criminology once informed me; and certainly the men whom I saw there were a motley set—more than half of them had, before going there, been in prison for crime. Most of them were in the prime of life, and they were of all sorts and conditions; men who had belonged to the leisured class were there, working side by side with men who had at best been casuals. The majority had been unskilled labourers; still there was among them a fair number of coachmen, waiters, shoemakers, carpenters, and clerks. There were also two architects, two sculptors, a book-keeper, a commercial traveller, and two men who, until they went there, had never in their lives done a stroke of work. In appearance most of them were not prepossessing: in some of their faces, indeed, evil was stamped unmistakably. Even in appearance, however, there was a marked difference between the first-class inmates and the third, proof that a sojourn at Korneuburg does good, not harm. Judging by their looks, the average man is certainly a better man when he leaves than when he arrives. Even the very worst of those who go there is the better for going, the Director maintained, as he learns while there that he must work, that work is something from which there is for him, in this life, no escape. And that is a valuable lesson, one that changes his whole outlook. For if he must work, he would rather work outside than at Korneuburg. The result is, when he leaves, he is determined to work, to try to earn his own daily bread, if for nothing else but because he knows that unless he does, he will soon be again in Korneuburg. And as a rule he does work. Of that there is proof; for of those whom I saw there, only some seven per cent. had ever been there before.

Witzwil, the Berne reformatory, is much smaller than Korneuburg: only some 250 men could be housed there when, some years

ago now, I last saw the place ; whereas at Korneuburg there was room for 1000. And in appearance it differs markedly from Korneuburg ; for there is nothing of the fortress about it, nothing of the prison. A tourist might easily pass it by thinking it merely a large farm-house. Not a soldier is ever to be seen there, rarely even a policeman, and there are no officials standing about keeping guard over the inmates. The Director, his assistant, and his book-keeper are the only real officials there are, as the labour masters are employees who, while watching over the inmates, work side by side with them and just as hard as they do. None the less the discipline maintained there is every whit as strict as at Korneuburg ; and the work of converting loafers into decent, self-supporting citizens is carried on just as successfully.

Then it is not in size and appearance alone that Witzwil is unlike Korneuburg : there are fundamental differences between the two reformatories. For whereas the work done at Korneuburg is only 'bettering,' that done at Witzwil is preventive as well as bettering. No one may be sent to Korneuburg who is not already a loafer ; but to Witzwil not only may actual loafers be sent, but also men who are in danger of becoming loafers ; and they are sent that they may be strengthened physically, mentally, and morally, so that they may overcome the temptation to loaf. For the Swiss, being sensible folk, are alive to the fact that a man who loafs soon becomes unemployable, a burden, therefore, on the community ; and it is more humane, they hold, and very much more economical, to help a man not to become a burden, than to maintain him when a burden he is.

By Swiss law a man who neglects his work, throws it up without just cause, refuses when unemployed a job offered to him under fair conditions, or who leads a disorderly life, drinks to excess, spends his money recklessly, failing the while to provide for those dependent on him, may be declared by the local authorities to be in danger of becoming a burden on the community. He may then be sent to a penal workhouse for two years ; or for five, if he has been there before. If he has not been there before, he may be sent for less than two years, even for two months ; and he actually is sometimes, or at any rate was, when I was there. That is, however, a great mistake, those responsible for the working of Witzwil maintain ; and not only they, but every expert in such matters whom I have ever met. According to them, a sojourn of two months in a penal workhouse does no good at all. Two years there at least are needed,

if a man is to be cured of the work-shirking habit, especially if, as is often the case, he is an inebriate as well as a shirker. And there are cases in which even two years are not enough. On that point the Witzwil Director was very emphatic. Still, of those who spend two years at Witzwil, a good third are radically cured, he assured me. They become while there not only capable of earning their own living, but anxious to earn it, anxious to make a fresh start in life as self-supporting members of the community. And the majority of the other two-thirds are so far cured, when they leave, that they may be trusted to try to be self-supporting, thanks, in a measure at least, to their fear of being sent to Witzwil again.

At Witzwil, it must be noted, the inmates are not only made to work, condemned to solitary confinement on bread and water if they try to shirk working, but they are taught how to work, using their heads as well as their hands the while. There is a night school attached to the reformatory, with a teacher who is always on the alert to help those who wish to learn; to help, too, those who have special talents to develop them. There is a good library for the use of the inmates; and concerts and lectures are given there from time to time. There is a singing class, too, which they are encouraged to join, and two choirs, which are to many of them a source of delight. Then two pastors and a priest pay them visits and try to bring good influences to bear on them, try to interest them in passing events, especially events touching Switzerland. Nor is that all. When I was there the Director and his wife were working indefatigably among the inmates, striving not only to civilise them, but to humanise them, to make them feel that they were not alone in the world, that they had friends eager to help them. Everything that could be done was being done, in fact, to save them from that fatal Ishmaelitic feeling by which so many such folk are beset, and to turn them into good men as well as good workers.

Meanwhile they are all well housed. Every man who is not hopelessly degraded has a little cell of his own, in which he eats and sleeps and may, if he chooses, spend all his spare time. He must keep it clean; and he may, if he will, make it not only comfortable but attractive. Several of the cells I visited were full of pretty things which their owners had made out of odds and ends. It is only the very black sheep among them who sleep in dormitories, and even there the beds are good. Then all the inmates are extremely well fed—better fed, the Director admitted, than the average working man outside. And it is but right that they should be;

as they work harder, and for longer hours, than the average working man. Moreover they raise for themselves most of what they eat, not only beef, mutton, and bread, but butter, cheese, fruit, and vegetables, all of which, together with milk, figure largely on their bill of fare. The men who work specially hard have five meals a day. Alcohol is barred inexorably: they have never the chance even of smelling it.

Witzwil has its own gasworks, waterworks, and electric station, in all of which the inmates are employed. They lay the drains, make the roads, do what building is required. They work, too, in the diverse shops, make their own clothes and shoes, act as blacksmiths, carpenters, painters, etc., when they cannot work on the land. Still the staple industry of the place is agriculture. That, together with cattle-rearing and dairy work, keeps two-thirds of them busy the whole year round. And it is well that it is so; for not only does agriculture pay better than anything else there; but it is better for the men themselves. They all need picking up when they arrive; and the picking up is done more speedily, there is proof, if they work in the open air than if they work in shops. And fortunately they have plenty of land on which to work.

The reformatory is just at the foot of the Jura Range; and when in 1895 it was started, it had attached to it 2000 acres of land, most of which had long been out of cultivation and was covered with peat, as it had never been properly drained. There were no roads there, only a few bridle paths; and what buildings there were, were in ruins. Within ten years, however, such good work had been done that the Canton decided to add to it 2500 acres of the pasture land on the mountain side. By that time, indeed, the whole domain had been transformed from a desolate waste into a model estate. Fruit and vegetables, potatoes, beet, asparagus, and lettuce were then being grown on an extensive scale, as well as wheat, barley, and rye; while the rearing of cattle—pedigree cattle, some of it—was being carried on skilfully and at a high profit. Buildings of all sorts had been constructed, not only barns, cattle-sheds, and outhouses, but a large central house where most of the inmates live, two homesteads where the specially trustworthy men are housed, and a homestead where the men who have served their term at the reformatory may stay on for a time, if they choose, as free workers, providing they undertake never to enter a public-house. All that building had been done—well done, too—by the inmates, under the direction of the labour masters. It was they,

those ex-loafers, who had transformed the whole countryside, redeeming themselves the while.

Witzwil is a notable proof of what can be done by skilful, expert management, combined with rigid economy, for it does not cost Berne one penny; and every penny Berne has ever spent on it has been repaid with interest. When I was there, indeed—that was before the war—the reformatory was, and had been for years, a regular source of income to the Canton. £39,300 was spent on buying the land and £20,700 more on developing it, providing it with drains, roads, buildings, furniture, gas, water, electricity, etc. Thus the full cost of the place to Berne was £60,000. And well-spent money it was; for fourteen years after the reformatory was founded, the estate, with what was on it, was valued officially at £100,000. It is now worth very much more. The cattle alone was then valued at £11,000, while the buildings were insured for £31,000. From 1895 to 1907 no rent was paid for the land, it is true; but rates and taxes were paid from the first, as well as a rent of £400 a year for the buildings, as soon as buildings there were. In 1908 the rent, rates, and taxes amounted to £2,228; and Witzwil could and did pay that huge sum easily; for during the previous year, on agriculture alone, a net profit of £6,881 had been cleared. The reformatory was self-supporting almost from the first, as every inmate was earning as much as he cost; and when I was there even the average man, the Director informed me, was earning twice as much as he cost, including his wages of 1s. 6d. a week. He was adding, in fact, to the wealth of his country while working out his own salvation.

In Switzerland as in Austria, those on loafing bent regard penal workhouses, of course, as the veriest abomination of abominations. Among the working classes as a whole, however, the feeling is quite otherwise. I never yet met a decent working man or woman, in either country, who was not quite ready to admit that such institutions are of very great use; never met one who seemed to have even a touch of sympathy for those who are sent there. And little wonder either; for although loafers strive to prey on all classes alike, the class on which they prey most successfully is that to which decent working folk belong. If, here in England, penal workhouses were opened to-morrow, it is they who are trying hard to earn their daily bread by the work of their hands, who would have most cause for rejoicing.

*GOLDEN-RED.**A BURMESE TALE.*

BY LIEUT.-COMMANDER A. S. ELWELL-SUTTON, R.N.

MA SAN was the wife of Maung Po, the snake-charmer. Her husband was away in the jungle seeking another snake to replace Shwe-ni, or 'Golden-red,' the great hamadryad, which had been their principal stock-in-trade for so long. So long, indeed, that the time was come when, in accordance with the curious Burmese custom, he must be set free for good—really for good this time, and not merely for a holiday. Shwe-ni, as a matter of fact, had never been denied that. He could have had no complaint on that score. Whenever he had seemed out of sorts, through lack of proper food, or because of the irksome conditions of his life, Maung Po had let him go, as is the custom too amongst the snake-charmers; but only on the understanding that he would come back to finish his term. And Shwe-ni had always kept the tacit pact, had always reappeared by the same boulder, and let Maung Po seize his neck with those swift fingers of his and plunge him into the great snake-charmer's basket. But the term of servitude was now really completed, and Maung Po had struck the great bell of the Zedi or Pagoda, and sworn in the presence of the spirits of the earth and air, who had come forth to listen in answer to the call, that Shwe-ni should be finally free to seek after his own fashion the Way of Virtue, whereby he might rise in the scale of existence and attain at long last the Ultimate Release that all living beings ought to strive for.

Ma San was not looking pleased with herself that morning. She was annoyed, in the first place, at having lost Shwe-ni, for she loved the great golden-brown beast, and it, in return, seemed to have an affection for her, if indeed its cold heart were capable of such a feeling. It would lie across her breast with its long body coiled round her waist and neck, its head upon her shoulder, listening to the caressing words she addressed to it, and gazing at her with a strange look of understanding in those cold steely eyes wherein mysterious lights would play as the forked tongue shot in and out. Perhaps the clammy embrace partly assuaged the unappeased

instincts that stirred continually in Ma San's breast when she gazed on other wives more fortunate than she, who was still childless after more than three years of married life.

But now even this bizarre satisfaction was to be denied to her, and, what was of immediate practical import, that lazy Maung Po had not yet secured a substitute, although the great New Year festival was near at hand, when the people would be eager for the shows that accompanied it, and open-handed too. Ma San bethought her of the beautiful gold filigree necklace she had seen in the bazaar and asked Maung Po to buy for her. But he had demurred, grumbling that the last season had been a bad one—the loss of Shwe-ni did not make future prospects more hopeful; they must wait at least to see how the New Year went. . . . He was ever mean, was Maung Po, she thought.

She got up discontentedly and busied herself about the little hand-loom that stood in the veranda of her low bamboo-built house. It was whilst she was doing this that she felt rather than saw the presence of someone watching her. And without looking, too, she knew who it was. But she applied herself to the loom, pretending to be entirely absorbed in it.

'You work hard, Ma San,' said a familiar voice.

She kept her head turned away still, but retorted: 'A good example for Maung Tha, who, if he has no work to do had better be paying respects to the Blessed One. . . .'

'Nay, gracious pearl,' interrupted Maung Tha, throwing a half mocking, half earnest devotion into his tone, 'I have not been idle. I have been seeking to express what is in my thoughts about one—

'Whose wondrous beauty draws me from afar
To where those cruel eyes of hers are seen,
Of liquid brightness like the morning star
Reflected in the crystal dewdrop's sheen.'

He repeated the lines with an exaggerated affected intonation, then after a pause added: 'Yet why do I say cruel?' and sighed appropriately.

'You are still foolish,' replied Ma San, but she turned her pretty face and slight dainty figure towards her visitor, and her hands dropped from the loom as she looked at his handsome impudent face, 'and your poetry has not improved,' she added.

Maung Tha stroked his smooth chin. 'Perchance there is

something you love more than poetry,' he said coolly. 'Has your lord given you the golden trinket yet? Surely it could find no worthier resting-place!'

The undercurrent of mockery was still in his tone, but there was that in his eyes as he gazed at her that made Ma San clasp her hands together over her breast as though to defend it from some shaft of evil, and she said angrily: 'Your eyes are usually keen enough. Since you see it not, it is not here.' And she took her hands away again.

'And Shwe-ni has gone too,' went on Maung Tha, as though he had noticed nothing; 'unhappy beast, how he will miss those moments of bliss when he hung . . .'

'You must go,' exclaimed Ma San hurriedly, pointing down the narrow jungle track leading to her dwelling, 'the Yahan Alawka, He Who is above the World, is coming, and he must not see you here.'

Maung Tha apparently agreed on this point, for he disappeared hastily by the back of the house. Ma San began to work at her loom again, trying to appear unconcerned, though of a truth she was far from being so. What a pest this Maung Tha was! Good-looking, and rich as men counted wealth in those parts, idle and careless of the precepts of the Holy Ones, and skilled in the ways of love, if half what was said about him was true—and indeed Ma San was quite ready to believe it all! She bent her head down over the work, and pretended not to notice the approach of the Yahan until he was quite close to the house, then she started up in feigned astonishment, and taking the bowl he held out, hastened away with it to prepare the customary offering.

The Yahan remained standing without whilst she was doing this, with his shrivelled body bent in an attitude of studied humility and his eyes gazing meditatively on the ground. He was an old, old man, if looks counted for anything, but there were evidences of vitality in the shrunk form, and a penetrating power in the eyes when they raised themselves from time to time, bespeaking an intelligence that had not followed the decaying way of flesh, but had rather, in the long years of asceticism and meditation, enfranchised itself from that bond.

He looked up at the sound of Ma San's returning footstep, and gazed keenly at her as she handed the bowl to him. Just as he was about to take it a cock began to crow from the roof of the little shed where the fowls were disporting themselves. The Yahan,

still with his eyes on the woman, made some mysterious signs, concluding by placing his hand on a charm that hung round his neck. The crowing ceased, but Ma San hung down her head, for she knew, of course, that the cock symbolises the spirit of evil desire, and that the voice of it was echoing the secrets of her own heart.

'My daughter,' said the old man, laying down his bowl, 'forget not the Way that leads to salvation. Have you prepared the offerings for the shrine of the Victorious One, who conquered the Tempter, and taught us the laws of the Noble Path?'

'The honoured Father knows that we are poor,' she replied a little sullenly, 'and even that which we have is taken from us,' and she told him about Shwe-ni. 'We shall never find another like him,' she added; 'but indeed Maung Po finds nothing at all,' and she looked up discontentedly at the Yahan, with her pretty lips pouting.

'The Blessed One cares not about the size of the offering,' said the Yahan quietly, 'a grain of rice will suffice to purify the heart that seeks to be pure.' He stooped and, picking up the bowl, passed on slowly along the jungle path, fingering his beads and muttering to himself the precepts of the Way of Release from the bonds and fetters of the flesh. He was scarcely out of sight when the cock crowed again.

Ma San started, looking fearfully around. But if she had expected anyone else to be approaching—or returning, she was relieved—or disappointed. There were no more footsteps; no visible appearances, though one could not say what spirits were abroad. . . . A little shuffling sound made her start again and look round in time to see and recognise a small creature scurrying across the floor of the veranda. It was Put, the water-lizard, and Ma San bit her lips at the evil sign that had come so aptly to confirm her discontent; for the water-lizard's presence in the house is an omen of poverty. She sighed, and then squatted down again to her loom, but her thoughts were of many other things than her weaving.

Maung Po returned towards evening, empty-handed. 'Now,' cried Ma San when she saw him, 'what foolishness is this? What shall we do with the festival upon us if you have nothing really worth showing? I might have the gold necklace if the New Year went well, but it is more likely that I must part with even the few poor things I have.'

'I have done my best,' he answered sullenly. He stepped aside

towards what looked like a small dovecote raised on a post. In it was a bowl formed of the half of a cocoanut shell, dedicated to the use of the 'nat' or genius of the house. It is the woman's duty to keep the little bowl replenished, a task requiring constant attention, for in that hot climate the thirsty 'nats' soon drink the liquid up.

Maung Po looked inside, and then turned sharply to his wife. 'It has gone dry,' he cried angrily. 'It is not for you to reproach me with work ill-done.'

Ma San got up hastily, muttering something about water being precious at this time. She fetched a small earthenware vessel and refilled the bowl from it, her husband watching her darkly the while. 'He drinks fast these days,' she said uneasily, and then with a return to her reproachful attitude: 'Yet it will not be my fault if we can give him nothing in the days to come. Then he will be grieved, as I am, that Shwe-ni has gone.'

'It was Shwe-ni's time,' replied Maung Po surlily. 'You know that if I had kept him beyond it he would have brought evil upon me. Perhaps you wish it so,' and he looked at her keenly, so that Ma San had to drop her eyes.

'You know you talk foolish words,' she murmured, 'but surely there will be evil if money does not come in these next weeks. The store is low, even as the water is; neither is there much left here,' and she touched significantly the few ornaments that adorned her person. 'The water-lizard has been in the house,' she added.

Maung Po shrugged his shoulders.

Next morning when he was about to set out again she said: 'I dreamt that Shwe-ni was by the big boulder. . . .' She told him other things, but not quite all the purport of the dream, which had perhaps done no more than express some hidden thought within her.

Maung Tha came again that day and spoke with her, and the day after too, and yet again and again, whilst Maung Po continued his bootless quest. Ma San did not forget now to refill the cocoanut bowl of the house-genius; but always when her husband returned she spoke to him of Shwe-ni, and the great boulder by which they had always found him; and of the ornaments the other women would be wearing at the festival; and of the golden necklace; and at last she said that she had seen the jeweller who had told her that he would have to accept an offer for it if they did not make up their minds soon . . . to all of which Maung Po had listened moodily answering nothing, and for two or three days, as

though to show his indifference in the matter, he had not even gone into the jungle, but had idled about with the men in the village, smoking and gambling and drinking rice-spirit. And he would come home in an evil temper, and speak hard words, and look at the nat's cocoanut bowl as though half hoping to find it empty, but it was always well filled, though the store of rice grew smaller and smaller, and soon there was little of anything left, and Ma San must know that the necklace was not for her—indeed the jeweller had hinted as much when she went to look at it.

At last—it was but two days before the New Year festival—Maung Po announced curtly that he was going to the jungle, that the signs were propitious for success, but that he had far to go and would not be back till late. He did not add that he had lost money gambling, and that matters were desperate with him. Ma San heard him indifferently, and after he had gone sat out on the veranda thinking. But it would have been better had she gone to the shrine of the Conqueror to meditate how the bonds of sin may be cast off.

She had not sat thus for long when Maung Tha appeared and stood before her, and one of his fists was clenched as though he held something in it. And he smiled at Ma San with that impudent smile of his, that had more assurance than ever.

How the thing glittered as it lay in his palm when he opened it, and explained, still with that mocking smile, that he had decided to buy it after all, though the dealer had held out for a great price, and now he, Maung Tha, was wondering what to do with it, wondering on whose breast it would look fairest. Of course it would be no use giving it to Ma San, for she would not be able to wear it without causing remark, yet for him to see it on that breast would give him food for many happy dreams, and perhaps for her too if she would gaze at herself in the polished metal mirror. . . .

Ma San could not explain how it happened, but in a very few minutes that necklace was about her neck, and she was gazing at her own reflection, and Maung Tha was gazing at her, was standing close by her, so that his eyes seemed to burn her, and the red gold about her neck burnt too, searing her flesh like hot iron, and the heat engendered from it and from those eyes ran all through her veins, and her head became dizzy with it, and she looked up to meet Maung Tha's eyes for one instant and dropped her own swiftly, yet not so swiftly but that his arm was round her first . . . and he was saying many things to her whilst the minutes lengthened

into hours, and all the time the genius of the house slowly drank up the water in the shrine till at last the bowl was dry.

After Maung Tha had gone Ma San remained sitting alone on the veranda, gazing in rather dazed fashion out into the shadows of the jungle path along which Maung Po would return. The necklace was still about her neck, for in spite of what he had said at first Maung Tha had left it there, telling her to hide it at ordinary times, but to wear it as a sign to him when he passed the house that the moment was propitious for them to look into each other's eyes again. But the necklace did not burn now ; on the contrary, there was a chilly feeling about it, reminding her of the cold embrace of Shwe-ni . . . Shwe-ni . . . if he had not gone, Maung Po would perhaps have gained enough to have bought the necklace himself, and then, instead of its being a symbol of shame, she would have had the satisfaction of wearing it before her friends. . . . She tore it off hastily and hid it away in her bosom, for there along the path she saw Maung Po coming, earlier than he had intended. She could see the great basket slung over his shoulders, and she wondered had he been successful in his pursuit after all, now, when it was too late.

She had little time for reflection, for Maung Po came along swiftly, and she remarked that his face was sullen as he climbed on to the veranda and deposited his big basket on the floor without a word. He looked at his wife as though expecting her to say something, but she remained silent, sitting with her eyes cast down. Something about her attitude aroused a sudden suspicion. He took a quick step over towards the shrine of the house-genius, saw the bowl empty, then turned upon Ma San with a raging torrent of abuse.

When he had at last exhausted his epithets, 'Again, again,' he went on ; 'you can be no true wife to me, who work and strive for you, but whom you despise because I am poor, because I cannot buy you a paltry necklace. And whilst I have been doing that for your sake which will bring evil upon me . . . whilst I have incurred the anger of the Nagas . . .' He stopped, rather out of breath.

'What do you mean ?' she asked, startled.

His face, which had lit up under the excitement of his anger, grew sullen again as he became calmer, and he replied tauntingly, 'A necklace of gold, was it not, red gold, but the price was too great, too great.' He laughed, but there was a note of despair in his laughter. 'Well, I have paid the price, and you shall have it, your necklace.' And he pointed to the basket, and went away angrily without another word. As he did so the cock on the shed

began to crow. Ma San's hands went almost involuntarily to her ears as though to shut out the sound, but she dropped them again and remained seated, gazing fearfully at the basket. It seemed to quiver a little. Ah ! surely it was not empty this time !

She got up and walked slowly, almost fearfully, towards it. Yes, there was something moving inside. She laid her hands on it and there came forth a low hiss, but it was not because it was a hiss that she became afraid, but because there was a familiar and indeed not unfriendly sound about it. The snake-charmer's wife opened the basket, and immediately a great golden-brown head reared itself up. She recognised it at once, of course. It was Shwe-ni. In a few seconds the beast was twined about her according to its wont, and the cold eyes were gazing up at hers from the head lying upon her breast, whilst the forked tongue flashed swiftly in and out. And all the time the cock went on crowing ; the cock and the serpent ; the symbols of lust and hate, lust and hate. . . . And Ma San bethought herself of the law of the Nagas, the Snake-Kings, and of the ill-luck that would come upon Maung Po and his house for having broken that law by recapturing Shwe-ni when the beast had earned its release. Ill-luck. . . . With a feeling of resentment against her husband, she bethought herself that the ill-luck had come already, had indeed coincided with Maung Po's decision to recapture Shwe-ni ; and now, she, Ma San, would have to pay the penalty of this sin which his action had brought upon her. Retribution, retribution, inevitable retribution—the words rang continually in her ears now with compelling reiteration. It was the law of Karma, and the price of the sin would be exacted even to the uttermost, if not in this life, then in some future one ! The oppression of the thought weighed upon her with an increasingly intolerable burden, as the cold clinging coils about her neck pressed down on her, and within her bosom the other golden red necklace lay cold too, seeking to hide the secret buried in her heart, yet known to the house-spirit, whose bowl of water she had neglected, but from whose eyes nothing is hid and who would surely transmit the tale to the divine recorders.

Ma San began to wonder how the retribution would work itself out. Would she perhaps be a cold snake in the next life, cold of heart and cold in blood, incapable of the fire that had surged in her but a while ago when Maung Tha had looked at her and his arms had clasped her waist ? Or would she perhaps be born again into one of those grim hells such as one saw at the entrances

to the shrines ? And she shuddered at the thought. Surely her sin was not great enough for that—not yet, not yet, though as she gazed now at the cold eyes looking up at her from her breast, a strange fear took hold of her that the immediate consequences of her act had not yet fulfilled themselves, but might drag her along a path too horrible to contemplate, and for which the direst penalties of the deepest hell could hardly be sufficient. She shuddered again, and, impelled by that sudden fear, got up, unwound the snake, and put him back in his basket. But though relieved of that burden, the necklace still lay in her bosom, and she put her hand in to take it out, bethinking herself where she should hide it ; but before she had done anything with it, she spied the old Yahan coming along the path, and she snatched her hand away hastily, and stood waiting till he reached her and handed up his empty bowl as usual.

She went off to fill it. Maung Po was nowhere about. He had doubtless gone off to the village to drink and gamble. As she was returning an irresistible impulse came over her to talk to the Yahan, if perchance he might utter words of comfort for her. She had often before, indeed, invited him to sit down and rest and partake of his rice there, but always in vain. He had preferred to go away into the jungle solitude. But she made her request, with perhaps something in the tone of it more compelling than usual, and, rather to her surprise, he acceded to it, and squatted down presently on the mat she laid for him, and having partaken of his rice, waited meditatively for his hostess to say what she was apparently desirous of saying.

Ma San looked at him, but could find neither encouragement nor the reverse in his attitude, which was benevolent enough but passive almost to indifference, with a certain coldness of demeanour that chilled her, too, with a recollection of Shwe-ni's embrace, and of that cold metal still lying within her bosom. But the thought of it brought back the terror, and the pictured scenes of hell's tortures rose before her eyes, and at last, clasping her hands, she said :

‘ O Holy One, there are many grains of rice in the bowl, but the heart does not seek purity that is oppressed by the shadow of sin,’ and she shivered and looked away.

The Yahan looked away too, and his face remained perfectly impassive, though his tone was kindly as he said sententiously :

‘ Even the Blessed One himself knew the weight of sin, but even as he cast it off, so may we all do if we will follow the Noble Path.’

Ma San tried hard to recall the Precepts that point the Way, but instead there came the memory of Maung Tha's embrace, and the bitter words of Maung Po, and the strange thoughts that had arisen in her when Shwe-ni's head lay upon her shoulder, and she shivered again and said :

'O Father, the Way is hard. It is hard to give up so many things that the world counts worth having, that our hearts long for,' and she laid her hand over her own heart, trembling as she felt the hidden necklace beneath it, and knew there were things her heart desired more than it desired purity. 'Wealth and pleasure and bright ornaments,' she went on, 'and the desires of the flesh. . . . But for you, O Father, perhaps it was not difficult?' And she contemplated his shrivelled body with a slight feeling of contempt, almost of disgust. Was this living death then the price one had to pay for following the Path? Would she, Ma San, have to dry up the pulsating blood in her veins, as it had dried up in his?

The Yahan seemed a little stirred out of his impassivity by this turning of the tables upon himself, but he answered quietly :

'The burden of sin is not light, and the Way for the casting of it off is difficult to follow, yet there is no other. The bonds of the flesh and the world must be broken. If not, the law of Karma will take its course, and for every sin the full penalty be exacted. Go, my daughter, to the shrine of the Blessed One. Ponder the Precepts there, and it may be that through the mystic powers of his holy relics the light will come upon you, and you will learn to follow the Noble Path even as I strive to do.' He rose up and, picking up his bowl, stepped down off the veranda and slowly went his way.

Ma San sat on alone, with her hand at times playing round her bosom where the jewel still hung. The Yahan's words seemed to ring continually in her ears : "The law of Karma must take its course, and for every sin the full penalty be exacted," unless—unless she could give up the world and the flesh, and, casting off all their bonds, mount that hard and narrow path to salvation. Oh ! it was hard indeed, harder than ever since the very sin whose burden was weighing on her had taught her what it was that she would have to give up. It was all very well for that cold-blooded old man, who by long privations and an ascetic diet had so dried up the warm current of his blood that the passions in it had been finally subdued, but for her, Ma San, whose flesh was soft and smooth and blooming, and whose beauty could be heightened by gay colours and bright

gold, and in whose veins there ran a rich warm blood . . . Ah! she felt it surging within her now in the recollection of that fatal hour, and her heart, the heart that should have sought for purity, beat more rapidly, so that she had fain to cover her face with her hands, as though to hide it from some invisible witness of her shame. Yes, the Way that demanded the giving up of these things was too hard—too hard. A reckless feeling came over her. Let the law of Karma take its course, but meanwhile let her reap the joy, careless of the price that would have to be paid.

Maung Po came back presently. He had been down in the village and had found out that the necklace was gone from the jeweller's stall. The thing had seemed like some omen of the ill-luck that was now to be his due, and it had made him angry, and rather afraid. And as he had lost money again gambling and was also a little drunk, it was not surprising that he was in a thoroughly bad temper. He found Ma San seated on the veranda with the snake twined about her neck and bosom, and the sight increased his wrath and fear, reminding him poignantly of his action and its probable consequences. He began abusing her about the snake, and her importunity with regard to the necklace, her neglect of the bowl of the house-genius, her idleness, extravagance, and love of pleasure. And Ma San listened, making no answer, but occasionally caressing the golden-brown head and gazing hard into the sombre, inscrutable eyes whose coldness gave strength to her own assumed impassivity. Then as the torrent of Maung Po's words slackened a little, the cock began to crow, and the sounds echoed in Ma San's ears as they had done before, repeating continually lust and hate—lust and hate . . .

Next day Maung Po was away busying himself about the arrangements for the festival. He would not be back till late, he said. After he had gone Ma San got out the necklace from a secret place where she had hidden it and sat playing with it for a while. A low familiar hiss broke in on her meditations. She had almost forgotten Shwe-ni. In a few seconds the beast was out of his basket and twined about her neck. How cold the coils felt . . . but she let his head rest on her shoulder, and picked up the necklace again, toying with it, and wondering, wondering, would Maung Tha come? And she knew that she would be angry if he didn't, that the bond that held her to him could not be cast off, but must bind her even as the snake coils were binding her.

He was there sure enough, but he did not seem best pleased to

find the great serpent where the necklace should have been, though he saw the latter too in her hands. He kept his distance respectfully remarking: 'Surely, O sister, it has an angry look. Was it not true then that its term of service is fulfilled?'

'And if it were true,' she replied meaningly, 'are we so concerned about laws?' And she caressed the great snake's head.

'It is not well to break the law of the Nagas,' he muttered uneasily.

'But the laws of men and of the Holy Ones,' she rejoined, flashing her eyes upon him, 'we are not afraid to break those.'

He quivered under the passionate glance that accompanied the words. If it was he who had first aroused the flame in her, he began to know that, like the fisherman in the Arabian tale, he was in way of becoming a slave to the fiery genius he had invoked. He had woven the bond, and it was weaving itself around him also.

'Put it away,' he said a little fiercely; 'you have something better to wear there—something that makes you beautiful, something that means. . . .' He pointed to the necklace.

Ma San looked from it to the great snake, glanced at Maung Tha, and then away from him and around. There was nobody about—hardly a sound in the house or the jungle. She had a free choice between those jewelled bands, the golden-red living one, with its cold inscrutable gaze, and that other dead red gold one, that yet bespoke such a promise of life and joy and passion. Ah! surely that was better than the cold law of the Noble Path. Laws, laws . . . men broke them always when it suited their convenience. Slowly her eyes drew back to where the other's searched for them. They met at last, and held together for a space, each questioning, each answering their own questions. Then Ma San arose and put Shwe-ni back in his basket, but the gold necklace she clasped about her breast. . . .

But when Maung Tha had gone she hid the necklace, and got Shwe-ni out again and sat thinking, whilst the beast's head lay on her bosom. And the thoughts that came to her were evil indeed, for the theme of them was hate, an ever-rising hatred of her husband, Maung Po, who would be drunk again that night, and would abuse her, and whose luck would surely be worse than ever now that he had broken the law of the Nagas. Why should she be tied to that ill-luck by making herself a partner to the breaking of that law? Surely there would come ill-luck enough on her own account if that other inexorable law of Karma worked itself out to its inevitable

conclusion. There was indeed the Way of Escape, but . . . no . . . she could not, would not follow it, could not renounce that for which she had already lost her soul. She had chosen *that* way, and would drink the cup of its joy deep, deep, careless of what the morrow might bring. She would look into her lover's eyes, and feel his arms about her, and his breath hot upon her cheeks, and the retribution of the future would weigh for nothing against the joys of that embrace . . . only—she looked into the steely eyes gazing up at her out of that flat golden brown head, and seemed to read a reproach in them—she must not be called upon to bear this additional burden !

Moved by this thought, she suddenly unwound the snake and flung it down on to the path below leading away into the jungle, bidding it go whither it would. The beast hissed loudly in its surprise, but, recovering, shot to and fro across the path swift as thought, then, gliding up one of the timber supports of the veranda, stopped in front of her and, rearing up its head, began to sway its body as though in its accustomed response to the snake-charmer's music.

Ma San gasped, drew back, and hid her face in her hands.

'He will not go,' she muttered ; 'the law has been broken and the evil must come. . . . For whom, for whom ?' And then, as she squatted with bowed head whilst the great snake swayed in front of her, there came strange thoughts, grim thoughts, suggesting a way out of the coil for the time at least, but she shuddered, and put them aside. Yet they would not go, but rose ever again, whispering in her ears as the demon tempters had whispered in the ears of the Blessed One. And still Ma San strove to quell the voices, even as the All-Conquering One had done, but the burden of her sin was upon her, and she could not find the force within herself, nay, there was rather that within her urging her along the evil path, telling her that thus could be made safe the way of desire. And all the while the great snake swayed before her.

Ma San looked up at it at last, and its cold eyes gleamed on her, and the forked tongue flashed quickly, as there passed a glance between the two. And it seemed to Ma San that in the contact of that glance her own evil thought took definite shape, and flew over to the beast that received it with uncanny comprehension, with a look of such devilish intelligence that the woman must needs hide her face from it again. When at last she looked up the snake had disappeared. It had coiled itself of its own accord in its basket.

Now the day of the festival was come, and the theatres were being set up for plays and music, and innumerable booths prepared for their prospective supplies of ice-cream and mineral water, and toys and candles and shrine offerings. This being the New Year, it was the time of the Water Festival, and men set water about in vessels to throw over one another in celebration of the visit of Indra, the King of the Spirit Land, to the abodes of men, and soon the scene became one of lively animation as the people began to gather in noisy groups, eager for amusement.

Of all such groups it was noticeable that that which gathered about Maung Po was larger than usual. There was a strange air of expectancy, almost of apprehension, about the people, for the story of Shwe-ni was abroad, and there were not wanting those who shook their heads dubiously, and told grim tales of what happened to snake-charmers who had dared to defy the law of the Nagas.

'Go not too close, O brothers,' said one old man to a little band about him that seemed to look up to him as an authority in these matters, 'there are few for whom retribution for some past sin is not waiting, and the Naga may look on us as partakers of the wrong that has been done him.'

The warning was doubtless apt, but curiosity gradually overcame fear as the sound of Maung Po's pipe rose upon the air, and the crowd pressed gradually closer, to give back again with a faint universal gasp, as the lid of the basket lifted and Shwe-ni's great head swayed about above the opening. Then, while he uncoiled himself from it, there was another uneasy movement in the crowd as Ma San, who had been sitting by her husband, rose up and stepped forward, looking prettier than ever in her gay-coloured robes, with the flowers stuck in her black hair, yet with something in her attitude, and in the uncanny light in her eyes, that sent a shiver through the onlookers, and a murmuring like to that made by the rice shoots when the sea breeze stirs them of an evening. And the great snake too quivered as it gazed on her and swayed itself with increased ecstasy.

Now it was a part of the performance for Ma San to wind the beast about her whilst its head would still keep time to the music. She stood looking at Shwe-ni, and Shwe-ni continued to watch her as though waiting for the signal, but seemingly none came, for both remained where they were. And all the time the weird droning of Maung Po's pipes swelled upon the air, drowning the lesser noises of the crowd, which had indeed become strangely stilled, as though the

people too were fascinated by the expectation of some untoward happening, and the eyes of most were as much upon Ma San as upon Shwe-ni.

But the woman had no consciousness of the multitude's gaze, nor did she seem to have any recollection of the part she ought to be playing. And indeed her mind was absorbed by something far different. She was gazing at Shwe-ni, and even as the beast was hypnotised by the music, so its eyes hypnotised her, and she saw nothing else but them, could think of nothing but what she seemed to read in them, could hear nothing but the uncanny music that seemed to be a part of Shwe-ni, and it was as though she and the beast had become one too, one in comprehension and purpose. And what that purpose was proclaimed itself all too clearly in the black thoughts that ran through Ma San's mind, and surely passed over from it, winging their way to their destination by the unseen bridge that spanned the space between her eyes and the cold gleaming ones of that swaying head.

Suddenly a loud booming report crashed upon the air, breaking the bizarre spell that seemed to have woven itself around the scene. An excited murmur ran through the crowd. It was the first of the three signal guns that announce the coming of Indra and the commencement of the Water Festival. Heads turned this way and that, and with their attention momentarily distracted, nobody quite saw what happened, and indeed the thing was swifter than a thought; but of a sudden the music ceased, a wild harsh shriek rose on the air, a man's body rolled and writhed on the ground, and through the undergrowth beyond there flashed momentarily a moving streak of gold and red. Then came another shriek, a shriller, softer one, and Ma San lay on the ground too, not writhing and rolling, but still, in a dead faint. There boomed upon the air the second of the signal guns.

The majority of the crowd broke up, and with that strange indifference characteristic of the East, turned itself to the business of the festival. There was some head-shaking and nodding. A few remained to render such assistance as could be given. There was none of any use for Maung Po, as all knew well, but Ma San they carried to her house, and when she had recovered left her with such consolation as is proper to the occasion. The woman sat on alone as the evening shades drew on. From the village came the noise and laughter of the festival, and through the trees could be seen the flickering gleams of the illuminations.

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Now it was a part of the performance for Ma San to wind the beast about her whilst its head would still keep time to the music. She stood looking at Shwe-ni, and Shwe-ni continued to watch her as though waiting for the signal, but seemingly none came, for both remained where they were. And all the time the weird droning of Maung Po's pipes swelled upon the air, drowning the lesser noises of the crowd, which had indeed become strangely stilled, as though the

people too were fascinated by the expectation of some untoward happening, and the eyes of most were as much upon Ma San as upon Shwe-ni.

But the woman had no consciousness of the multitude's gaze, nor did she seem to have any recollection of the part she ought to be playing. And indeed her mind was absorbed by something far different. She was gazing at Shwe-ni, and even as the beast was hypnotised by the music, so its eyes hypnotised her, and she saw nothing else but them, could think of nothing but what she seemed to read in them, could hear nothing but the uncanny music that seemed to be a part of Shwe-ni, and it was as though she and the beast had become one too, one in comprehension and purpose. And what that purpose was proclaimed itself all too clearly in the black thoughts that ran through Ma San's mind, and surely passed over from it, winging their way to their destination by the unseen bridge that spanned the space between her eyes and the cold gleaming ones of that swaying head.

Suddenly a loud booming report crashed upon the air, breaking the bizarre spell that seemed to have woven itself around the scene. An excited murmur ran through the crowd. It was the first of the three signal guns that announce the coming of Indra and the commencement of the Water Festival. Heads turned this way and that, and with their attention momentarily distracted, nobody quite saw what happened, and indeed the thing was swifter than a thought; but of a sudden the music ceased, a wild harsh shriek rose on the air, a man's body rolled and writhed on the ground, and through the undergrowth beyond there flashed momentarily a moving streak of gold and red. Then came another shriek, a shriller, softer one, and Ma San lay on the ground too, not writhing and rolling, but still, in a dead faint. There boomed upon the air the second of the signal guns.

The majority of the crowd broke up, and with that strange indifference characteristic of the East, turned itself to the business of the festival. There was some head-shaking and nodding. A few remained to render such assistance as could be given. There was none of any use for Maung Po, as all knew well, but Ma San they carried to her house, and when she had recovered left her with such consolation as is proper to the occasion. The woman sat on alone as the evening shades drew on. From the village came the noise and laughter of the festival, and through the trees could be seen the flickering gleams of the illuminations.

She set her mouth hard, leaning her chin upon her hand. She was free, and so far from being an object of suspicion, had received her due meed of condolence. None could suspect that she had done anything, if indeed she had. Maung Po had brought the misfortune on himself. If Shwe-ni had read some thought of hers . . .

But she knew that the price of her freedom would have to be paid in the end, and therefore let her reap the full benefits of it whilst there was time—time. There might not be too much, and afterwards . . . the grim hells . . .

She got up slowly and took the necklace out of its hiding-place, then squatted down again, holding it in her two hands in front of her. Yes, it was the symbol of that which she had won, which she would have to pay for—the world, the flesh, joy and love and pleasure, Maung Tha's arm about her waist, the swell and flow of the rich warm blood through her veins, the wine of life . . . so transient a thing that a man's could be snatched away in one brief instant. . . . She shuddered again, but her hands gripped the necklace more tightly. Ah ! she must hold on to that whilst there was time.

She looked around and out into the dark shades of the jungle. The noises of the village festivities still sounded from afar. She could see nothing, but she knew he would come again before long, after the funeral. . . . He would come and wait and watch for the sign that was the thing she held in her hands.

She looked about again ; got up and paced the veranda, gazing from each corner. Nothing, nothing yet ; but he would come, oh ! he must come, for thus alone could there be recompense for the punishment to be. Her hands, gripping the necklace, raised themselves slowly above her head. Then in an instant the golden-red band lay about her bosom.

*TWELVE YEARS AGO : A DESPATCH-RIDER
AT MONS.*

143 SLOANE STREET is not a significant spot for the milkman, nor do the bitter-sweet activities of its staff stir their imaginations, but to me its rooms were as a cathedral and its ways a memorial service. £11 10s. is not a huge gratuity, but every penny of it has its separate picture for me. If I am tempted to be reminiscent in saying good-bye to the Army I crave pardon, but can give as my reason, firstly, that I am sentimental, and, secondly, that I wish to record, now in 1919, some few events and impressions all important to me, and, I hope, interesting to others, before they are either forgotten or exaggerated so artistically and innocently that they may one day strain the credulity of my grandchildren.

While strolling across Trafalgar Square a few days ago to extort from my bankers yet another fraction of my dwindling fortunes, I realised that I was standing on the exact spot as on the night of August 4, 1914, and what I saw was a crowd clamouring for release from the Army, a necessary but somewhat ironical corollary to the scene of four and a half years ago, of which it reminded me. Whereas now there was a low murmur, a forest of rifles, and clanking of shrapnel helmets, then there was deafening cheering, a rare enthusiasm, and, what is still more rare with our crowds, an unself-conscious waving of hats : among those hats were those of three brothers, and one of these was mine.

We were dazed, I remember, at the thought of war, but felt no doubt that war there would be. In the light of what I was told in Paris not many weeks later of the sickening anxiety of France as to the attitude of England, the sincerity of this crowd is a touching memory. I doubt whether the violation of Belgium was uppermost in most minds, but there was certainly a great loyalty—loyalty to the Entente, loyalty to the abstract idea of justice, loyalty to self. And there, to help us in our doubt, were the first profiteers, the sellers of little Union Jacks ; but we did not grudge them the reward of their foresight, for they had gauged the will of England before the politicians had voiced it, or their Majesties on the darkened balcony of Buckingham Palace, to which we were swept irresistibly, had sanctioned it.

When England had spoken for war we hurried to the Old Gambrianus, not to hob-nob with the many Huns who frequented it, but merely to satisfy an invincible regard for lager beer, which we badly needed at the time, and realised we should sorely miss in the years to come.

After a day spent in attempts to enlist in infantry regiments, who were entirely at a loss what to do with us, we came home next evening, and there I found a letter from Oxford saying that despatch-riders were urgently needed for the front. Now merely through chance I had once owned a motor-cycle (through a game of chance, as a matter of fact) ; for three short months I had maltreated an aged Triumph, and bowed the knee to the grimy denizens of garages. So after a moment's hesitation, dispelled once and for all by my brothers' rage at their inability to ride a motor-bike, I crawled into the first train to Chatham the next morning, a very sleepy traveller in bowler hat and tweed suit, expecting to be allowed to come away for a day, after enlisting, to say good-bye to my family, who were down in Cornwall. But this, of course, was impossible, and I handed in my suit-case and civvies, duly labelled, to the 'Quarter-bloke,' who confused my address with his own ! But I learnt a lesson : this loss was my first rude introduction to the acquisitiveness of the soldier, a characteristic which I began at once to emulate—indeed, the Q.M.S. of the 5th Signal Company told me afterwards that I actually raised the standard !

Luckily my stay at Chatham was short. I did not like the idea of drilling, because it did me good. I did not like saluting by numbers in a tunic, bowler hat, tweed trousers, putties, and ammunition boots, because I did not consider the garb aesthetic. I did not like sleeping on the floor, because I had not learnt how to. I did not like listening to the lurid speculations of the subalterns who lectured to us on our future duties, because I thought suicide would be a saving of time, for they did not wonder whether we should be killed, but merely what form of death it was to be. They let their fancies roam in a most depressing way till our teeth chattered, and the more sentimental clutched the photographs of their lady-loves in a last vicarious farewell.

Our instruction was most interesting in the light of actual experience. We were told how many Germans would pass a certain spot in a certain time, and on the side of the road to combine the duties of counting them and impersonating a mushroom. Later one of our number acquired the D.C.M., not for counting a column, but

for going back close to see whether they were German or not. Then we were told how we should be sent out to make maps. Again we were told how to get rid of our messages when surprised by the enemy. One of many amusing methods defies oblivion, that of eating them in a sandwich kept for the purpose. Imagine a motor-cyclist deliberately munching an operation order with a Hun revolver pointing at a vital spot. It struck me that a desire for nourishment would be out of place in the circumstances, and most unlikely to deceive : moreover, it postulated a credulity of which the enemy never gave a hint.

It is not surprising that this policy of frankness about the dangers of our job, which was as necessary as it was disquieting, gave rise to a certain amount of melodrama. What saved me was a hurried visit from my father and sister, as representatives of my distant family, who caught me a few hours before starting to join my unit in Ireland. The desire to conceal from them my fears for my safety actually killed them outright, and thenceforward I tried hard to acquire the soldier's delightful philosophy of fatalism.

The three or four days' wait at Chatham were spent in learning how to walk without a stick, saluting sergeant-majors, holding nightly farewell dinners, and memorising the respective positions to be allotted on our person to compasses, haversacks, water-bottles, mess-tins, and revolvers. All except the last we had lost within ten days, jolted by the cobbled roads into the hands of the advancing Germans.

There is no need to describe in detail how ten of us a few days later, like so many khaki Christmas-trees, journeyed to town, held up the Holyhead express, landed in Ireland, were refused petrol, were stoned in a village, and billeted ourselves there for the night in a spirit of revenge, and how I was blessed by a nice old Irish peasant woman. Suffice it to say that we arrived at Carlow, and reported to the 5th Signal Company, which was mobilised there, and all but ready to start.

It is only one of my many reasons for respecting the memory of the late Colonel Holwell that we were treated with what must have been thought unheard-of consideration. For here we were, twelve civilians—for two more, we found, had arrived before us—in the flimsiest of fancy dress, presented with two unearned stripes apiece and five shillings a day, suddenly thrust upon an N.C.O.'s mess and the company at large with no knowledge of discipline or military law, but only a great desire to be of use. We might have

been exceedingly uncomfortable, but we were not. There in a crowded tent, so hot that several collapsed fainting from the effects of a generous inoculation, we learnt some home-truths about the value of the individual in the army, which was new to me, an Oxford undergraduate, whose sole assets were a great self-regard and a marked disinclination to work. I do not accuse the rest of my companions of having the same undesirable characteristics, though they also were in the main from Oxford or Cambridge, with a few business men to leaven the lump. One could not have found a more sociable crowd in the whole British Army ; hereafter we ate, drank, slept, cursed, feared, and hoped together in perfect harmony.

Early on the morning of August 13 the good ship *Archimedes*—the epithet is merely by courtesy—steamed slowly out of Dublin harbour to the accompaniment of snores from the wise old soldiers, but that of 'Land of Hope and Glory' from twelve innocent young ones in the prow.

We took three days crossing to Havre, and it was our first touch of real discomfort. We had a lot of horses on board, and as I had never before shared a bedroom with a horse, though frequently with brothers, I found it beastly. There was no accommodation, of course, and we slept on deck—if fits of tortured unconsciousness can be called sleep—in coils of rope. It is significant to note that we had already assimilated the esprit de corps of the Engineers, and resented sharing the boat with R.A.M.C. details ('details' expresses a minority), who appeared to spend the day in ceaselessly lining up for meals.

I think it was on the second day that we sighted the coast of Cornwall. To all it was a sentimental sight, but for me it was more, because my mother and the rest of my family, to whom I had not said good-bye, were there. There, I learnt afterwards, on the top of a cliff stood my father with a pair of field-glasses glued to his devoted eyes, searching the horizon for the ship which was carrying his son to the war. He was interrupted by a tap on the shoulder and was politely but firmly marched off, being informed by his captor that other enemy agents had availed themselves of clerical garb to work their horrid schemes ; also, and this is a great touch, his borrowed glasses were confiscated. Although the incident was spoilt by the anti-climax of release and return of the glasses, it is a great tribute to the conscientiousness of our coastguards. One cannot help thinking that they must have been very busy in those first few months of war.

We landed on the 16th in a state of wild excitement and indescribable dirt, practically simultaneously with the rest of the convoy, which we had caught glimpses of on our way over, and were marched, mid scenes of touching enthusiasm, to an old factory above the harbour which was to be our billet for the night. It was absolutely bare, except for a stuffy attic filled with cotton or wool—I cannot remember which. On this a few of us slept that night in preference to the bare floor and bumpy cobble-stones which we observed the rest of the company to be patronising, thinking ourselves very cunning to have discovered it. As a reward for our initiative, next morning we were the unwilling hosts of a colony of fleas, whose vigour and health are unrivalled in my experience, except perhaps by the Bulgar variety, whose standard was certainly high.

On the beach at Havre two of us were treated to a tent and bathing dress by a delightful French woman, to whose small and charming daughter I forfeited my heart and incidentally one of my tunic buttons. Orr, who bathed with me, put his knee out during the swim, and had this, in addition to other hardships, to put up with in the trying times which followed. On the way up to Landrecies, where we finally detrained, I found that the incident of the button, which I fondly imagined to be an isolated instance of sacrifice and affection, was gloriously thrown into the shade by the behaviour of the company. Atkins cannot resist the desire to give away, and at every level crossing, station or town, the movement of the train being practically imperceptible, he had time to give away his hat badge, his buttons, and his cigarettes. True, he received many cooling draughts of beer and cider; but it would be cynical to say that the gift was regarded in the light of an exchange.

To my great sorrow at the time, I was sent, immediately on detraining, to be attached to a brigade. I did not consider that it might be more thrilling with a brigade, though it unquestionably was, but I disliked leaving my new friends. So, with a heart sinking at the mutability of military affairs, I went off and reported to the brigade signal officer, who employed me the greater part of that night carrying messages to divisional headquarters. As one of these jobs was the transport of a sack of nails I was hardly surprised to get a puncture; I was also annoyed, which was foolish, because there is nothing more conducive to the laughter of the gods than an enraged and weary person by himself at night.

I woke up the next morning in the big double bed which I had

hired for the night in the village—I think the name of it was Ors—and found the section gone and the village deserted by troops. After a momentary panic (I experienced one like it when locked in a train going to Luxembourg while trying to get to Switzerland at the age of twelve), I squared my shoulders and thought. What would my lecturers at Chatham have me do? A compass was useless, as I did not know where I was, and the sun was not shining. Ah! I remembered. I must look along the roads for empty bully-beef tins, pools of perspiration, and buttons burst off from the strain of continual marching. But a fairy godmother, in the shape of the oldest female inhabitant, interrupted my musings and pointed first at my white and blue brassard and then at a road. In this way was I restored to my officer an hour or so later, who remarked: 'Ah! There you are. I wondered where you had got to.' Piqued by this very natural reception, I went on miles ahead of the column and ate an omelette.

Perhaps this reminiscence is dull, even duller than the others, but it will serve to illustrate two points which now thrust themselves upon my notice: firstly, that if I was to survive—and the desire to do so has always been an obsession with me—I must look after myself, find my own meals, because my duties did not generally allow of my feeding with the section, and find my own sleeping accommodation, because I hoped always to make myself comfortable; secondly, that it was already, and was going to be still more, difficult to find my way, a job which in the next few weeks was attended by every conceivable disadvantage, lack of proper supply of petrol, lack of carbide for lamps, almost total lack of maps, and, last and greatest difficulty of all, an infinite ignorance of the organisation of an army. We are all familiar now with brigades, ammunition columns, batteries, divisional supply columns, etc., but to one totally unaccustomed to thinking or hearing of these subtle distinctions it is not surprising that the divisional train stood for a sort of glorified luncheon car. It was very difficult to find people and things when we did not know what they would be like. I did not even know thoroughly the badges of rank, and was rather like the sentry in a home dépôt who asked me, when I expostulated with him for presenting arms to the sergeant-major, saluting a major as a second lieutenant, and entirely ignoring the colonel because he had a Burberry on, 'who those people were, dressed like officers, who had three stars on their sleeves.' So much for my ignorance, though so little does not adequately describe its depths.

I have no certain recollections of the events which followed those last related until our arrival at a farm-house only a few miles from the Mons-Condé Canal on Saturday, August 22. The next day I can remember well.

Having slept that night in great comfort on straw in an outhouse of the farm, which constituted brigade headquarters, we woke on the morning of the 23rd to find everything apparently very peaceful, and breakfasted on bacon and eggs. It was the last meal that we were to have for many days. Hereafter we lived on fruit caught from the generous hands of Belgian peasants, and as often as not crushed in our haversacks beyond recognition before there was an opportunity to eat it. Those amongst us who, being more callous than myself, were able to drink new-laid eggs from the shell sometimes had this pleasure; but, speaking for myself, I can safely say that with the exception of a few isolated tins of bully I did not see army rations during the retreat. The normal communications of the force, as was natural, were either cut, or impossible to establish in the first instance. The result was that we despatch-riders, together with a few orderlies on 'push-bikes,' were the sole means of communication for brigade headquarters. Thus, during that first day, at any rate, all information and operation orders between battalions and brigade of an urgent nature were carried by motor-cycle. It can, therefore, be imagined how much work 'Fatty' and I did. 'Fatty,' I have omitted to mention, is my term of endearment for a second despatch-rider attached from the division to meet the stress of work.

At breakfast a sapper appropriated my new jack-knife under my very eyes. When I confronted him with the crime he denied all knowledge of it, but explained that, as a matter of fact, he had a spare one, and offered it me. Whereupon he gave me my own. I thanked him with a sarcasm which was entirely lost on him—at least I am afraid so, though I prefer to hope.

Then came the first sign of war, a long trail of white shrapnel-puffs high up in the air towards Wasmes. It was the work of the first 'Archie' of the war, and such was our ignorance of its range and capabilities that we were ordered to take cover. While everyone was crouching under the eaves of the buildings and regretting the sudden end of what was beginning to be regarded as rather an elaborate picnic, I was ordered to go to the Cornwalls with a message, and, not only that, but to go 'all out' and time myself over the course. I felt very important as I dashed along through

Thulin and up the poplar-lined road to the Mons-Condé Canal, where, after some difficulty, I found the Colonel of the Cornwalls. He was mounted, and I remember praying fervently that I should not have to chase him over ploughed fields in the future.

Such was my excitement and so great the rattle of my machine that I did not hear any rifle shots or shell-bursts, though presumably there must have been plenty of both. It was a comforting thing, the noise of one's engine, on many occasions thereafter, and only when its hoarse clamour was silent did one feel really lonely and afraid. The whistling of shells is better drowned, and a machine-gun's bark is less terrible to the accompaniment of a homely and familiar exhaust.

My idea of warfare having hitherto been connected vaguely with stampeding horses, waving swords, and shining bayonets, I found it strange to see nothing to tell me what was going on. We had no time to wonder what was happening to left and right, but we should have liked to know definitely how went the battle on our line. Later, when stationery ran out and verbal messages delivered in agitated tones by brigadiers were the rule, we really knew more than most, and the white and blue brassard shining out of a cloud of dust stood for information.

All that morning and early afternoon I plied up and down that road, which soon was littered with dead chickens from a farm near the canal, tools and nuts from my motor-cycle, and then, incidentally, the soles of my boots from cornering at speed in the village of Toulin.

Later in the afternoon things began to look more lively. This could not have been apparent to the infantry, because they were in the thick of it the whole time, but to those who were keeping in direct touch with the infantry it was the first glimpse of 'actual warfare' (to use a phrase happily coined by a friend of mine later in Salonika to point a contrast with operations in France). I had been sent to remain at a bridge spanning the canal, wait till the small detachment of R.E.'s stationed there were ready to blow up the bridge, and then inform brigade headquarters of its destruction. On arriving I found a subaltern and a few sappers in a fragile wooden hut by the side of the road fondling some suggestive-looking square blocks of explosive. I had never had any experience of this sort of thing before, and, being vastly interested, I questioned the men about it, but they were too busy to answer. They very rightly placed me in the same category as the small boy in the railway

carriage who asks his patient mother why the wheels go round, and why they always travel third class. Then I heard the whine of bullets outside, and understood. I went to the door and there, in the middle of the road, was the subaltern, his field-glasses glued to his eyes, shouting 'There they are! There they are!' I looked, and he was certainly right, but I wondered why he used his field-glasses. I was short-sighted, and am still more so now, but the truth of his exclamation was evident. There they were, that swarm of grey-blue devils, advancing firing from the hip with the utmost inaccuracy, for the bullets were all passing over our heads.

People wonder what it feels like to be under fire for the first time. Well, this is my experience. First, I felt very important. This was no army manœuvres; it was the real thing. I pitied all those O.T.C. fellows who had not been so fortunate as I. Then I felt afraid. There was one of the chickens I had run over during the day lying in the road. How funny it would be for the soul of the bird to see me lying by its own body in a few minutes. Previously I had judged a building by its beauty and its ability to keep out rain and sun. Now it was bullets that must be kept out, and I realised that the wooden shanty in which we huddled from observation was simply challenging one to come through. Moreover, the bullets were coming clear down the road, and this was my thoroughfare. The men had something to do: they had no time for morbid imaginings, as I had. For that I envied them and feared correspondingly for myself.

When all was ready, and they sat down to wait for the last moment, I was told to be off to brigade headquarters. This, I felt, was combining business with pleasure; but I remember the agony of dragging my machine out of the hut and pushing it along the road for what seemed miles before it deigned to start. I chose the left side of the road for my retreat and all but grazed each poplar on the way back to Thulin; in my back were a hundred eyes, each separately flinching at each separate bullet.

One word before I leave this incident. When the division moved from Ypres to the Somme in the summer of '15 I met one of those very sappers who were blowing up that bridge. When we had exchanged noises of surprise at our respective survivals, he told me that the charge having proved insufficient the subaltern had lost a hand in going back to complete the job: which goes to strengthen the conviction that the gallantry of the sapper is often unobtrusive, but never unnecessary. It is bravery, not bravado.

I found the brigade staff in the middle of the road, hatless and perturbed. I gave what little news I had, and was sent back immediately to the Cornwalls, being informed by my signal officer that they would be found by this time about two-thirds of the way up to the canal. He patted me on the back as I left. I have never discovered whether it was a reward for my services or encouragement in view of my probable decease, but I value the memory of it inordinately. The donor was by the evening wounded and prisoner.

I found the O.C. Cornwalls at a farm-house by the roadside, and behind it cowered the chargers of such of the infantry as were mounted. I noticed the calmness of the orderlies, and having witnessed the playful farewell exchanged by two infantry subalterns, who obviously were prepared for and expecting death, I tried to be unmoved myself; placing my bike in as safe a place as possible, I leaned against a tree and smoked.

It was by now evening twilight, and the scene was picturesquely warlike. So unreal was it that it approximated very closely to a picture in a weekly illustrated paper. I was so excited, in spite of my efforts to calm myself, that the sights and sounds ceased to be terrifying. They were merely intensely absorbing. On the horizon glowed the flames of burning villages; straight as a die ran the road with the poplars motionless against the glare. Now and then arose the cry for stretcher-bearers; suddenly an ammunition wagon would dash from a turning, the drivers crouching on the horses' necks, and hurtle in a cloud of dust up the road; a company of infantry would assemble behind the farm-buildings. One by one they would crouch in the opposite ditch, glide across the road and advance in silent Indian file up the ditch on my side. There was a continued pop-popping noise which interested me very much. I turned to a N.C.O., one of those who, with fixed bayonets, were lining the road, and asked what that noise was. 'Machine-gun.' Why did it seem so loud? 'Cos it's pointing at you.' I could not wish for a greater clarity of expression, nor a more convincing conciseness. I thanked him inwardly, then, for confirming my suspicions, and I thank him outwardly now for his somewhat brutal frankness. It was the best policy. Similarly, though it is no more pleasant to the ear, it is better in the end to be told that we are wrong, or ugly, or going to die.

Nestling behind that tree I smoked my last pipe of tobacco and pondered on the sudden change from the life of an undergraduate to that of a civilian soldier. I wondered whether my people were

having supper in Cornwall. I wondered whether the old lady, to whose ward I was to have been tutor, had guessed where I was (because I had not told her). I also wondered where the Colonel of the Cornwalls was.

He must have forgotten me, because I was left getting more and more pensive, till company after company had passed shuffling wearily along the darkened road, and was advised by an officer to proceed on my own initiative. So with this object I started my engine, but was met with a torrent of most instructive oaths from Atkins and a forcible reminder from an officer that they were expecting an attack any minute and that the noise of my machine would give them away. Thus, with my greatcoat on, that hot summer night, and a stack of kit on the carrier, I pushed the machine for miles into Dour. Several times I fell down a three-foot ditch with utter weariness, and once I prayed aloud to be shot dead. Prayers like this are not easily forgotten. Such another was that breathed silently on the voyage from Ireland that the war might never end if it were necessary to return by the same route and under the same conditions.

I found the other despatch-riders in an outhouse at the station of Dour, and tried to tell them my adventures, but half-way through the first narrative I looked round and found them asleep. Piqued by their indifference, which, of course, was actuated by physical fatigue, I threw myself down and slept the sleep of sheer exhaustion, which is as precious and rare as it is indescribable.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the retreat which had now started without devoting a little space to a description of the conditions under which we worked. I have mentioned utter fatigue: this was our constant companion, and indeed in many ways our greatest friend. What rest we snatched was in the clothes we stood up in. More than one of us went to sleep on their machines and woke up in the ditch. None of us, with the exception of one bathe in the Oise, took off our boots for a moment. There was no time for washing. Besides, all the materials for a wash were lost with our kit after the first day or two. I remember once being washed by a Belgian woman as I was lying half asleep on my machine with my head on the handlebars. Meals there were none. Fruit and chocolate thrown with a generous hand by the peasantry were our meals as a rule. I have cherished memories of simple meals given me by the divisional staff or the brigadier to whom I was attached, such as a cup of cocoa, a biscuit or an apple. My

pre-war profession, blowing smoke-rings, was impossible to carry on owing to lack of supplies.

All day long we rode up and down the column with messages dealing with the rearguard actions or traffic control. But it was not till night that the real work began. Every unit of the division had to be found and given operation orders for the ensuing day. They were never, or practically never, at the exact spot which we were told, which meant delay and exasperation, for we had no lights. A common way of steering at night was with head in the air peering between the tops of the poplars which lined the road. Again, we had to carry out staff officers at night on our carriers with stable lanterns in their hands. For there were no staff cars in those days. Moreover, we had no maps of our own and had to memorise in a moment a staff map thrust before our eyes, reddened and almost invisible for dust. It can be imagined how the infantry fared when we at divisional and brigade headquarters were so placed.

So much for the permanent discomforts of the retreat, though there were many more incidental ones. I quote them mostly for my own benefit, so that I shall not forget, so that they may remain fresh a little longer, these new wonders of beds and bowlers, tube stations and table-cloths, dances and Dimitrinos, boiled shirts and boiling baths. But 'Be calm, they come to goal at last, my wandering wits.'

Early on the next morning I was sent out with a duplicate message for the 15th Brigade. The original copy had been taken by Fielding-Johnson, who had not returned. He was a cheerful and companionable Cambridge undergraduate, with whom, during the short time I had known him, I got on very well. Nothing more was seen of him, though there was a story that he was cut off by a roving patrol of Uhlans, and seen taken into a convent by some nuns. He was much missed by all of us, and his death brought home to us the fact that any of us, at any moment, might meet a similar fate.

I certainly had thoughts of this kind when I started out with a copy of his message. A brief account of my ride will give an impression of what motor-cycling meant. To the infantry on the road, who saw us passing them, we appeared to be the only members of the force who did not work. We were cursed for raising dust, getting in the way, frightening horses, and for not marching. It was quite a natural point of view for them, dead-beat as they were with fighting and foot-slogging. To the staff, however, we con-

stituted practically the sole means of communication, and we were proportionately valued and employed.

My first difficulty was to surmount with my machine four five-barred gates securely locked and chained. For I had to cross the railway twice, and at each crossing a wild Belgian railway official was shouting 'Allemands là ! Allemands là !' and doing all he could to obstruct me. As his exclamations neither encouraged nor helped, I dragged the Rudge over them all in a state of excitement bordering on madness, and my tongue red-hot with unintelligible obscenities. Then something went wrong with the lubrication of my engine, with the result that the plug half sooted up, and I was enveloped in a cloud of oily smoke. Luckily this happened on the top of the steep hill down into Paturages, where I passed a battery of field guns in action and some kilted stragglers plodding with set faces away from the scene of action. They must have been wounded, though I thought at the time that they were retreating. I turned sharp to the left at the bottom of the hill, and was about to dash under a bridge in front of me when I saw a small knot of people huddled against the embankment. It was the staff of the 13th Brigade, and among them I recognised S., the despatch-rider attached from divisional headquarters to the brigade. I tried to borrow a spanner from him so that I could remove and clean my plug. It transpired, however, that he had lost his machine in a hurried retreat from the Boche, because there was no time to mend a puncture, and he was at present sharing the use of a stolen civilian 'push-bike.' He told me that it was a happy thing for me that I had stopped, because there was hand-to-hand fighting going on only a few hundred yards the other side of the bridge.

So, with my engine misfiring badly, and still suffocated in smoke, I left that embankment. On it, I learned afterwards, one of our operators stayed in an improvised signal office till the enemy was coming up one side. He then smashed the instrument, cut the wire, and descended coolly on the other.

I toiled on, searching every road, but repeated inquiries from stragglers and wounded only resulted in the discovery of a few men once attached to the 15th. So I gave up after two or three hours and decided to report on what I had done to division. My bike jibbed, however, at the return journey up the hill, so I persuaded two weedy Belgian civilians to drag it up for me while I smoked a cigarette given me by a despairing tobacconist, who was throwing the entire contents of his shop as a gift to passing Englishmen.

On the way back I met W., who had been sent out with a third copy of the same message. He was told by the General of the 13th that the 15th appeared to be cut off. As a matter of fact they had retreated without being able to inform division.

I found the staff standing wild-eyed outside the station at Dour, collapsed in their midst, was helped into the building, gave a report on the roads I had searched in vain, was given a cup of chocolate and a biscuit, and sent off in hot haste to corps headquarters with the news. By the time W. was back, all papers were being burned, the telephone exchanges were being smashed with a sledge-hammer, and the wires being cut. It is sheer melodrama to look back upon, but it was merely common sense at the time.

Not many minutes after the delivery of my message to corps headquarters the cars were purring, kit was bundled into lorries, and they were ready to move. I asked the despatch-riders there what sort of time they had had. They said significantly they had had two wounded. I discovered afterwards from a friend, who was one of the wounded, that someone had been fooling with a loaded rifle : it accidentally went off and wounded both of them. I also consulted their artificer about my lubrication, and found that, the oiling being operated by a foot pump, I had been, owing to the vast size of my boots, pumping oil into the engine every time I applied the brake. In self-defence I may say that the misfortune was not due to the length of my foot, but to the abnormally square toes of the ammunition boot, which made it impossible to press the levers separately.

Divisional headquarters, I had been told, were to be at Villers-Pol for the night, so thither I repaired with W., who had been sent to say that the retreat had started from Dour. It was a comfort to be with him, because he had an extraordinary bump of locality, as well as a swift eye for situations. So I followed him like a little dog.

On arriving at the village we found no sign of life, so we tossed a coin to decide who was to snatch a little sleep and who was to conduct investigations. I won. We both lapped a long drink from a pond and he disappeared, the bargain being that he should return and wake me when he had acquired information about headquarters for the night. I was waked in the evening by an ambulance crawling past the pond and outspanning, but there was no sign of W. I had a similar attack of panic to that of many days before, when, at Ors, I woke to find my brigade gone. By sheer

luck I found the Divisional Signal Company at the other end of the village, and, among the other motor-cyclists, my friend W., who had volunteered for extra work and had been too busy to worry about me. I was told that another retreat had been necessary, and divisional headquarters was at St. Waast, whither we were ordered to move.

So far as we knew there was no one between us and the enemy. Imagine my excitement when you learn that I was taking down my gear when the order was received, having dropped a small but vital part of the mechanism ; for this there had to be substituted a nail filed down for me by the village blacksmith. The others very kindly waited for me to put my machine together, and we started off just before dark, having more than a suspicion that we might be attacked by a stray patrol from the woods which fringed the narrow road. Johnson's disappearance had made us cautious. How near we were to capture can be judged by the fact that W., who was sent back for the C.Q.M.S. at Villers-Pol, found the ambulance unit I had seen, advised them to push on without a moment's delay, and actually saved them from an enemy patrol which entered the village at one end as they left by the other. Later, on the Aisne, the chaplain attached to it thanked W. personally for his sound advice.

We passed the usual chequered night of sleeping fitfully between the different jobs, and before full daylight were on the move again. During an exhausting day of column riding we were buoyed up with a hopeful story of a strongly entrenched position to which we were even then supposed to be retiring. By the evening we were to be seen smiling a bland and knowing smile at the innocent Hun unwarily advancing into our trap. It was astonishing then and thereafter through the retreat how the vaguest optimistic rumour was received with a joyous credulity, flashed along the column, and delightfully exaggerated. Throughout it was a strategic movement, the division was returning to a rest-camp to re-equip ; the fleet had secured a crushing victory ; the Russians had dealt a smashing blow ; the French had cut the enemy's lines of communication. Perhaps it was a policy, not an accident, that such stories were circulated, just as propaganda at home started the tale of the Russians passing through England at night.

In the late afternoon some of us, who had managed to pass the column and get on ahead, arrived at Le Cateau, a fair-sized and cheerful market-town, where we actually were shaved, and not only

that but shaved by a woman. Though this luxury rendered the difference of colour between our necks and faces painfully evident, we were emboldened by a great hunger to dash into an inn, where we had an early dinner. The place appeared not at all disturbed. Perhaps, if their telegraph system is as leisurely as ours, they had not yet learned of the German advance. There was a sprinkling of French officers, mounted and in cars, set on 'apéritifs' rather than retreat. The shops were open: in one of them I tried to get some seccotine and was shown an assortment of Dutch dolls. The atmosphere of quiet gave us an increased feeling of confidence, though only a few hours later there was street fighting in the town, and a detachment of one of our cable sections was captured complete.

We slept at Reumont that night in a lofty barn, chuckling to ourselves at the victory we should witness on the morrow. Moreover, we enjoyed a fair rest, owing, I suppose, to the fact that the cables were laid and working to the brigades.

In the morning we were summoned to battle headquarters of the division, which was in one of a group of cottages outside the village on the right of the Le Cateau road. Leaning against the roof were some ladders, and a sort of rough platform had been fitted up for the General, the G.S.O.I., and the O.C. Signal Company, our captain. Dug into the road, with their head receivers on, were the telephone operators working like grim death.

The road sloped down for a mile or so, then rose again and disappeared over a crest. Along this crest was a row of poplars, and parallel to it were shallow trenches hastily dug by civilians the day before under the supervision of a few British officers detailed for the job. This was the 'strongly entrenched' position of the rumour. Naturally the enemy could range on the poplars and be sure of hitting their mark. Very near on the left—I say 'very near,' because a 60-pounder battery, when she speaks, is so audible that one minimises distances—was the 108th Heavy Battery in a hollow against a hedge with no protection. On the right of the road in front were a few guns waiting, presumably, for orders; a few, very few, ambulance wagons completed the picture.

It was a morning of agonising indolence for us, as the wires worked well. I rode only once, while some did not ride at all. The story of the impregnable position having been exploded, another took its place. A corps of French cavalry was to relieve us at 11.30—I think this was the time mentioned; at any rate, everyone looked feverishly at their watches from time to time, when the

wounded began to limp past us along the road to the village church, where a dressing station had been improvised.

The reports buzzed along the wires and scribbled on to message forms by the operators became more and more discouraging, and our conversation became more trivial and spasmodic as the situation became more tense. A continuous line of shrapnel-bursts was visible along the poplars on the crest, and the wounded said that the rest could not hold out much longer. Still no sign of the French. Later we were told that the commander refused to come to our assistance on the plea that his horses were too tired to move any farther. The story went—and it gave us great pleasure—that he was shot for it afterwards.

So we waited on, cursing the French, speculating silently on the prospect of complete defeat, and staring fascinated at the wounded, who filed past with grey faces and reddened bandages, sometimes alone, sometimes supported by one or two comrades. Then began a procession which I shall never forget, the remnant of a gun team without the gun, a team of horses with but one driver, frantic mounted orderlies, an officer with an arm shot off, a wounded bugler-boy, whose horse had been killed under him, cheerfully riding a derelict bicycle, a loaded ambulance, an empty ammunition wagon. Fuses for the 108th Battery had to be brought up by despatch-rider because the ammunition column could not, or would not, bring them themselves.

At about two came an order for some of us to retire to the farm where we had slept the night, and simultaneously a sudden and sickening panic. I think that the immediate cause was a round or two of shrapnel which burst near headquarters over some horses. The result was that lorries which were coming up with food and ammunition turned on their tracks, threw off their load, and infantry climbed on instead. Two men, one after the other, leapt on to the carrier of my machine, and I had difficulty in dislodging them. The road being very narrow, three or four of us, who had started to retire to the farm, were caught in the mob and were compelled to follow it through the village and beyond. It was only after some miles that we were able to dash into a farm-yard, eat a crust of bread while waiting for the road to clear, and make our way back. By this time the retreat had become official; our captain said good-bye and returned to try to establish communication with corps headquarters. We were told to shift for ourselves. He thought everything was up, and it certainly looked very like it. It was, however,

hard to believe that we were entirely lost. I, for one, had been brought up to the quaint conceit that Englishmen are never beaten, but I cynically remarked to D., as we rode away together, that it looked precious like it this time. Our nearness to defeat in this war has been a great lesson to us. The history of the war might well be expressed in four sentences. We are defeated; we may not be defeated; we may defeat; we shall defeat. The Peace Conference will decide whether we have defeated.

We were told that the next headquarters would be at St. Quentin, but we never covered more than half the distance that night. It was one of black despair and, as if to match our forebodings, a drizzle started which continued the entire night.

The scene on the road that night baffles description. We motorcyclists had stopped at a small cottage on the left of the St. Quentin road, having made up our minds that farther we could not go. The Signal Company bivouacked round the house, and one by one the divisional staff came in.

W. and I had collaborated in the slaughter of all the chickens in the outhouse and had plunged them straight into a pot to boil. Coffee was also found, which, with the chickens, made a passable meal, though I have since been told that an interval is generally allowed to fastidious people between killing and eating birds.

The staff would only stay a little while. They were dazed and incoherent. One of them I could not get to answer me at all. They took a little to eat and went trudging along the road to St. Quentin. For most of the horses were either lost or killed. While I was holding one of the few remaining, I watched the column passing. It was not disorderly, but pathetically disordered. It was a string of remnants, not a procession of units. There would pass a hundred or so K.O.S.B.'s gnawing mangel-wurzels or raw bacon, a little squad of Worcesters craving for water, a G.S. wagon full of men too dead to march, a gun-limber, an ambulance. We could do nothing for them except give them water. Then think of the pitiless drizzle, the hunger, the fatigue, the thought of possible defeat, and you have the night after Le Cateau.

It was not till afterwards that we reaped the fruits of this delaying action, that half day of rest which so wonderfully refreshed the spirit of the infantry during the last stages of the retreat. And then a retreat was to be speedily followed by a new advance and the Battle of the Marne.

GEORGE S. OWEN.

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THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

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2. 'With a staff she tottered onward,
Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly.'
3. '—— looks east, —— looks west,
But he sees not her whom he loves the best.'
4. 'I would with such perfection govern, sir,
To excel the golden age.'
5. 'Panes that —— the light of common day
With colours costly as the blood of kings.'
6. 'Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page xii of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue.
4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting

of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.

5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.

6. Solvers who write a second letter to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.

7. Answers to Acrostic No. 43 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than September 21.

ANSWER TO No. 42.

BYRON, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

PROEM: Canto iv., stanzas 36 and 57.

LIGHTS.

1. T	ufte	D	ii., 49.
2. A	lbani	A	ii., 38.
3. S	cio	N	iv., 168.
4. S	wif	T	iii., 2.
5. O	rang	E	i., 19.

Acrostic No. 41 ('Savage Breast'): Correct answers were received from 244 solvers, and partly correct from 5; there were also 10 from competitors infringing the rules, generally by the omission of a coupon.

The monthly prize is taken by 'Heathfield,' whose answer was the first correct one opened. Miss Margery Hollings, Charlbury, Oxon, will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

PROEM: Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*, iv., 12.

ANSWERS TO THE EXTRA DOUBLE

ACROSTIC.

1. M	aybea	M
2. A	lbemarl	E
3. V	andeleu	R
4. I	sabe	L
5. S	incer	E

LIGHTS:

1. Lytton, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, book i., ch. 8.
2. Southey, *Life of Nelson*, ch. i.
3. Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights. The Rajah's Diamond*, Second Story.
4. Præd, *My Own Funeral*.
5. J. Ingelow, *Laurence*, ii.

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